

SCRUTINY REPORT



MEETING: Children's and Young People's Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 15th September 2026

SUBJECT: Families First Partnership Programme Reforms

REPORT FROM: Jeanette Richards, Executive Director Children & Young People

CONTACT OFFICER: Beth Speak, Children's Transformation & Improvement Manager

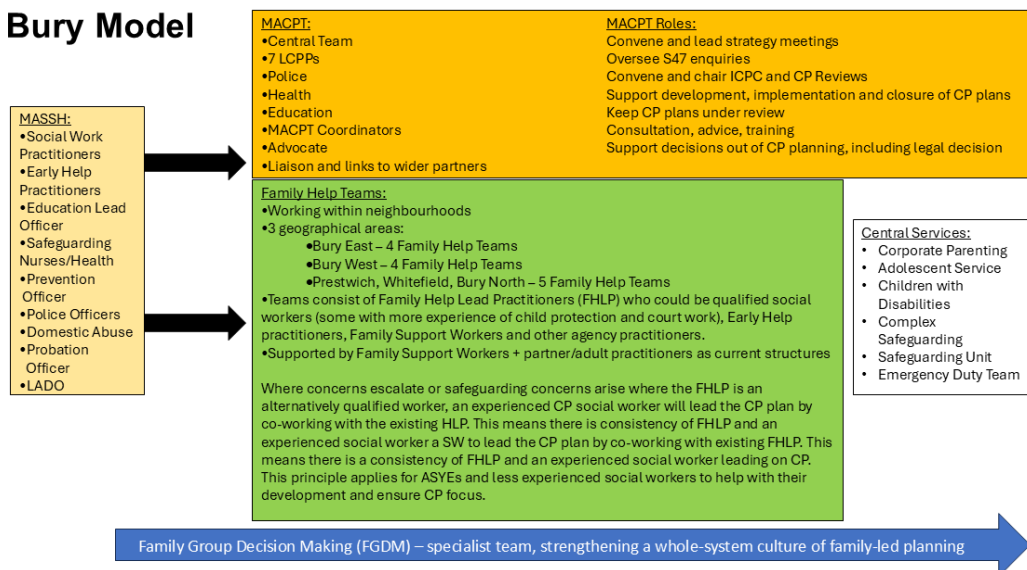
1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 As reported to Committee in November 2025, the government's Families First Partnership (FFP) reforms set out a new national model for how children's social care services must operate. The aims of FFP are to refocus the children's social care system on prevention, stronger partnership and multi-agency teams, robust multi-agency child protection system and develop greater use of family networks and family group decision making.
- 1.2 There are clear expectations for how services for children and families should be structured, how work is delivered, and how services are coordinated across agencies.
- 1.3 This report provides an update on implementation of FFP in Bury.

2.0 PROGRESS ON IMPLEMENTATION

- 2.1 Plans are progressing well and Bury is on track for implementation by April 2027.
- 2.2 We have mapped out services what services will look like, and how teams will ensure families continue to be supported:

Bury Model



- 2.3 Our front door arrangements are already operating as a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub. A recent peer review of our MASSH was carried out in August by colleagues in Blackpool who were recently judged outstanding by Ofsted, and are also a Family Safeguarding local authority. Their feedback will be used to further develop implementation plans ensuring that our MASSH provides firm foundations for our FFP implementation.
- 2.4 There is a very strong alignment between the Families First Partnership Programme (FFP) and Family Safeguarding, which is why Bury's implementation approach is to build on and retain the Family Safeguarding model rather than replace it. The reforms are mutually reinforcing and support many of the same outcomes
- 2.5 We are proposing Family Help Teams working across three neighbourhood localities, and teams will be made up of Targeted Early Help, Duty and Assessment and Family Safeguarding teams working as integrated Family Help teams. Whilst undertaking the same work as they do now, these teams will work together to ensure that children and families receive a seamless service, with one worker throughout their involvement (Family Help Lead Practitioner (FHLP)). The FHLP could be social work qualified or alternatively qualified. All child protection work will continue to have a qualified social worker, who will be responsible for the child protection plan.
- 2.6 We have developed a draft single assessment 'Family Help Assessment' and plan which will remain with the family throughout their involvement.
- 2.7 Under the Bury Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) our threshold document is under revision, bringing together targeted early help and child in need.
- 2.8 There is an expansion of our existing Special Guardianship Order (SGO) Support Service and Kinship Care Support Service, with a further review expected to meet the requirement of publishing the Bury Kinship Care Support offer. This will support permanence and stability for children and young people, keeping children within their family network.
- 2.9 Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPT) will bring together experts from Social Care, Police, Health and Education, ensuring the right decisions are made at the right time for children and seeking to protect all children from actual or likely significant harm, both inside and outside the home.
- 2.10 We are working with partners to clarify their roles and responsibilities within the MACPT and intend to start to test different elements from October onwards. Greater Manchester Police are already testing the role of the police in MACPT in Manchester and are sharing information

on how this is progressing. The police want a consistent approach for all the GM local authorities.

- 2.11 We have a job description for the new roles of Lead Child Protection Practitioners (LCPPs) who will be qualified social workers with substantial frontline child protection experience. By testing how the MACPT operates, and how partners work together we aim to be able to recruit to these posts and be ready for implementation in April 2027. We are working with the Voluntary Sector to recruit an Advocate for parents and carers involved in the child protection process.
- 2.12 Family Group Decision Making and family network meetings enable wider family members to come together and make a family-led plan. In Bury we are making good progress and have trained our staff in family network meetings. We have recruited additional family group decision making facilitators, which will strengthen our ability to provide this service at an earlier stage. We also have an expectation that all families will be supported in family network meetings.
- 2.13 We have a detailed workforce development plan, which includes support to partner agencies. The training and support will start in mid-October to ensure that staff receive appropriate training prior to implementation.
- 2.14 We have been having regular discussions with all staff within Children and Young People Services to keep them informed on plans, discuss concerns and we have responded to their questions. We have focused on the impact for staff and have developed a link where staff can ask questions and see responses to questions.
- 2.15 New staffing structures have been drafted and will be presented to October Cabinet as a Key decision, if approved, consultation with would commence will run until the end of November. A closure of consultation meeting should take place early December 2026 to confirm the outcome of the consultation to staff.
- 2.16 Partners play a critical role in delivering the Families First reforms, with responsibility shared across local authorities, health, police, education, early years providers, the voluntary sector and other safeguarding partners. Successful implementation relies on strong multi-agency leadership, shared decision-making, integrated teams and a collective commitment to providing earlier help, strengthening child protection arrangements and improving support for families. We have ensured partners have been part of the plans since the beginning, with initial socialisation workshops with the Safeguarding Partnership and multi-agency governance arrangements. Those arrangements have recently been strengthened by ensuring that the FFP Programme Board is a formal sub-group of the Bury Safeguarding Childrens Partnership.
- 2.17 We are working with Voluntary and Community Sector in commissioning Advocacy Services from families, parents, and communities.
- 2.18 External oversight of the reforms continues with quarterly meetings with the DfE North-West Regional Team, which include the delegated safeguarding partners (DSPs). Quarterly finance returns, documenting utilisation of grant monies are submitted to the DfE. External support has also been provided through the DfE Delivery Partner, Mutual Ventures, such as workshop delivery and socialisation of the reforms with partners but also acting as critical friend in our implementation plans, however in recognition of progress being made in Bury this support is likely to wind down in the coming months.

List of Background Papers:-

[FFPP Guide](#)

Contact Details:-

Beth Speak, CYP Improvement & Transformation Manager

Executive Director sign off Date:_____

JET Meeting Date:_____