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# Implementing Family Hubs

## Workshop: Integration

Speakers:

- Dr Camilla Rosan, Strategic Lead at the National Centre for Family Hubs
- Steve Bywater, Supporting Families Strategic Manager in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
- Catherine Drake Wikes, Bessborough Family Hub Manager, City of Westminster

### **Camilla Rosan - 00:00:01**

I'm going to run through a bit more about integration and what are the Family Hubs policy aspirations around integration. And then Steve and Catherine are going to say a bit more about what that looks like in practice.

Why should things be integrated? I guess in its simplest form, when there's a single need,

This is a family, a family of ducks, we're going to really keep with the bird based analogies for this presentation.

But if we think about a single need, say a housing issue and then, you know, there really isn't a need to work together and you can have a single worker. The families are represented by ducks and the kind of professionals represented by seagulls, and he's the housing worker who can help meet the single need because there's a single intervention.

However, most families have multiple needs, and so in this family of ducks we have some kind of financial difficulties, we have housing difficulties, and the kind of mother duck is pregnant and she's struggling to attend her antenatal appointments. You've got ducklings with problems at school and low mood and a little duckling with problems at nursery and then one of the ducklings, a speech and language delays and also some kind of health conditions.

This family doesn't have there's no child protection or child in need problems, but there are multiple issues going on with different children and different parents. And so, there are all these different seagulls or professionals who are getting involved in multiple services in different ways, with their multiple different interventions. And this is what we're calling the seagull effect, where you have all these different

workers who are sort of coming round you and I think, you know, we can all joke and are fronting an analogy.

But I think we can perhaps relate to that a little bit what it's like to, you know, be part of a group of professionals around a family and how we do that in a way. You know, we have these teams around the family structures and how we do that in a way that isn't overwhelming to families. And we do know that that it can be very overwhelming, particularly if your family has experienced trauma, abuse, and marginalisation. If you have all these different seagulls all around you and pecking away and squawking the loudest.

And families have to end up repeating their stories of trauma or adversity, which, as I mentioned earlier, is something that is a huge barrier to engagement. And as well as everyone being involved, there can also be the opposite, the Seagulls, when there's so many involved they can fly away because they can see there are so many people involved.

And that's this sort of sense of not for us. And having strict criteria and, you know, sticking to your box and we can become very inflexible, particularly when we're working with less and less resources with higher levels of need. And this is where people fall through the gaps.

They don't quite meet the strict criteria that each individual services have. This is problematic because structures have been built on the idea that you have a single need that's very, very severe and meets the threshold, and it doesn't consider as much as it could the cumulative burden of multiple, perhaps smaller, less high risk needs. And that's where programmes like Supporting Families have been, you know, hugely valuable and thinking about all of that.

And I think there's some huge learning from that, the kind of innovation in that programme that we want to achieve within Family Hubs. And this is just some brief evidence on how common multiple needs are, just really taking a mental health lens. This is within the CYP IAPT data of nearly 100,000 cases. And you know, of those cases one-in-two have family relationship difficulties, one-in-three self-harmed, one-in-five reported parental mental health issues, one-in-eight had experience of abuse.

This is really, really common. But if you are presenting with one of those things that you might not meet a threshold for, say, CAMHS, and because there's mental health present, you might not meet a threshold for, say, family support. I think what we're trying to say is, how can we define need differently? How can we define service boundaries differently? And this was really also highlighted in the Case for Change that services are owned by different departments.

And it's, you know, this is the voice of a practitioner and it's just too complex, and they fob you off and pass you onto someone else because they are all gatekeeping to keep to their budgets. And it's not on the individual practitioner level or even on

an individual service level that that isn't adaptive to some of the huge challenges that practitioners face. But it isn't what ultimately helps families. And so, we're trying to think about this in a different way or try out thinking about it in a different way. If there's a way to integrate that will help overcome this, we'll think about need in different fashion. So before handing over to Steve and Catherine, I just wanted to recap on what the Family Hubs policy aspirations are around integration. Those are the ones that were published this morning in the Family Hubs Framework.

So, co-production, making sure that what's at the heart of what we're trying to achieve has evidence and practitioner experience, as well as family need and family experience at the centre, and all of those things are considered. That we have a shared governance and leadership structure that is kind of considerate of some of the ambitions that are going on within our NHS with integrating care, bringing integrated care systems online so that local authorities are working with CCGs and commissioning.

And you know, that's absolutely core in the long term plan to make sure that local authorities are working alongside some of those changes as well. That there's joint commissioning, between health and social care and education and how VCS services are included within that commissioning.

That there are shared IT systems and data sharing and I noticed that was one of the high things that came up in the poll as well as virtual delivery. And those things are very interlinked. That we create integrated referral systems so that, you know, a panel with representatives across all the various services that families may benefit from. I can think together about a family and what that central point of access is. There is a degree of co-location in those services. That there's integrated outcomes monitoring to help again.

I mean, for me, outcomes are like a language that we can also think about families. People often think that outcomes can be quite dry, but they can be so powerful in bringing services together and creating really clear objectives.

And they really underpin the theory of change that Ben Lewing was talking about in his last talk. And I think critically, it's linking to the relationships pillar. Of course, these policy pillars overlapping. And to achieve integration and connection this has a huge amount to say with relationships.

And so, to do that, we really need those professionals the seagulls, to build trusting relationships with each other as well as, of course, with families. And they can often be really, really good at building their relationships with families.

But it's often the first thing that falls off the edge, building the relationships with other colleagues, particularly when it's been, when we've all been set up with this kind of competitiveness, keeping to our budgets, keeping to our corners. And so how do we build this trust between staff?

And I think one of the ways that we, you know, are proposing to try out as part of Family Hubs and using a kind of AMBIT model is how we might instead of having this team around the family, how we might have a team around the worker and that there's a kind of coordinating worker who is building this, these kind of trusted relationships with all the other absolutely integral members of the system and team, to integrate on behalf of the family.

So, these are some of the things that are kind of behind what we mean by integration, which is a bit, you know, integration might mean lots of different things to different people. And in the policy we're talking about it in terms of connection. But these are some of the aspects of integration that are in my mind when I'm talking about it in terms of Family Hubs. That's my bit.

And so, I'm going to hand over to Steve and Catherine now. So, Steve is the Supporting Family Strategic manager, and he works across the Bi-borough as it now is, which is the joint delivery landscape in London between Westminster local authority and Kensington and Chelsea local authority.

And he's been working in and innovating Family Hubs delivery for the last three years and his colleague Catherine Drake Wilkes, who's a Family Hub manager in Westminster. So, thank you so much for joining us Steve and Catherine and I'll hand over to you.

### **Steve Bywater 00:12:08**

- Thank you, Camilla.

Good afternoon, everyone. I'm Steve Bywater and Camilla has just explained what I do.

I'm going to talk to you a bit about what we've done, particularly in Westminster, in terms of developing Family Hubs over the last three years or so and the kind of integration process that we went through as part of that. And just a bit, first of all, about Westminster. I was listening in on the colleagues from Cornwall earlier and was just struck about how different Cornwall is in terms of its geography and its population to Westminster.

But also, actually some very common facts about how they've responded to developing Family Hubs.

But I just want to sort of be clear about what goes on in Westminster a lot of people who visit it think of Buckingham Palace and the House of Parliament. But it's quite a complicated borough, it's very small. It's probably about four or five miles from top to bottom, but with a really big population, 248,000 people and 18% of those are children.

It's very densely populated, and some of the areas you can see in the map in the bottom left hand corner, for example, that's Hyde Park so obviously, very few

people live there. So, a lot, lot of people living in quite a small space. It's a very diverse population as well.

Just under half the residents were born outside of the UK, and a huge number of languages are spoken by our children and families. Take a look at this chart.

**Catherine Drake Wilkes - 00:13:39**

- The slides?

**Steve Bywater - 00:13:43**

- OK.

**Camilla Rosan - 00:14:01**

- Thanks, Steve. I thought you were just doing a really excellent pre-amb.

**Catherine Drake Wilkes - 00:14:09**

- Nobody would have known.

**Steven Bywater - 00:14:11**

- I did everything apart from hit the button that said share. So, does that work?

**Camilla Rosan - 00:14:20**

- The picture of a puffin was keeping with my sea bird theme.

**Steven Bywater - 00:14:26**

- So hopefully now you can see the map of Westminster.

OK. Perfect. Thank you.

I was just about to talk about mobility as well, so significant numbers of people move in and out of Westminster for a whole range of reasons, people relocating from abroad, but also families moving out, more people moving out than moving in. So, a population that's quite difficult to keep track of. And later on, Catherine, will talk about some recent arrivals who have been asylum seeking, or evacuee families that we've also been working with in the area.

And that's just one of the sort of different balances that we need to keep in mind when we're working with families. Also, high levels of deprivation in some parts of the borough as well. So, you could see the black and the red areas there, they are areas which are most deprived and some of them are amongst the most deprived in England, despite quite high levels of affluence in other parts of the borough.

So, as I said, a really complicated, interesting situation to work with, which is moving all the time. In terms of Family Hubs so before we started thinking about

Family Hubs I think it's important to point out that we feel that we had very strong partnerships already across children and family services and that included the statutory and the voluntary sector and other agencies as well.

And we had an early help partnership board, which has been in place for a number of years, which is mature it includes a lot of different agencies who make very big contributions in terms of their time and the development of services as well. And that's growing all the time.

There were wider ambitions to develop hubs across Westminster and three years ago. So, it will fit more than that with the aim to bring services closer to residents regardless of where they live.

Because although it's a small borough, it takes quite a long time to move from one area to another. And that was backed up with various policy decisions, including paper that went to the Health and Wellbeing Board, I think in 2016, looking at ways of organising services around this. More recently, in 2019, we developed a new Early Help strategy, and the important thing about that was it was very much developed by the partnership.

It wasn't the council's strategy, it was the Early Help partnership, and it was trauma informed where all the agencies involved wanted to work in a similar way and we thought about the shared behaviours of different agencies. So, no matter who families come into contact with, there is a kind of shared agenda of how we want to work with them. And I think ultimately it was wanting to have an Early Help system, which isn't just about having an Early Help team based in children's services, but anyone who works with families at the early stage, being able to provide a consistent response, a response from someone that families want to get the response from. And also, that point that has been made several times earlier about families not having to keep telling their story to different people.

We also had shared ambitions to take our integration to another level, and I think that was one of the key motivators for Family Hub practice. And then lastly, Supporting Families agenda. So that's been my link with the Family Hub developments in Westminster. We applied for Earned Autonomy in 2018, which meant we had some funding which we could invest in our Early Help system, and there were a number of elements to what we've subsequently done that have been really accelerated by that.

So, in terms of what our vision is around Family Hubs, and I think again, I think Cornwall said it's not just about buildings. And for us, the workforce being integrated is the most important part of that. So, although some of them might be based in the same space, there is a virtual network of providers across the area. We want to look at children aged 0-19, rather than just the early years. We have families feeding back to us, that although they really value the children's centres

that we have, they felt they came to a bit of a cliff edge towards the end of that, when their children started school and services were less coordinated.

So, we wanted a single approach to working with families across the area. And then the buildings themselves. So, we have now got three Family Hubs, two of them are in repurposed buildings, which are already being used, and there was also some co-location.

But we've taken that a lot further with our Family Hub offer. And there's a third one which is being developed as well in the north west of the borough. They are seen as a focal point in the community. Again, people can go in and ask for support and one of the reassuring things, I suppose about the first Family Hub was families are increasingly encouraging each other to go and use the hubs. So, families were kind of putting the message out there, that there was something that families could access, which would be helpful for them.

And then all those other concepts as well. So, we really clearly wanted a whole family working, not just looking at children of a particular age group making sure that we thought about parents' needs and the importance of lead professionals. As someone to coordinate the work that takes place and moving towards the idea that everyone is an Early Help worker is not just a specialist team. Some of our ingredients for integration so talked about the sites, they're all in the areas with the highest level of need.

So going back to the map, the black and red areas of the borough where our Family Hubs are located. I think also importantly, we've linked in with a number of voluntary sector organisations which are other points to getting access to those services.

So, in each locality, there are different voluntary sector organisations that are partnering with Family Hubs, around that agenda. Really importantly, in terms of integration was the Integrated Leadership Team model.

So, we started that off in the south. And Cathy might say more about this, but a group of managers managing teams such as Early Help, children's centres, school nurses, health visitors, and the voluntary sector organisations meeting together, regularly developing a shared vision, agreeing what they wanted their Family Hub to look like if it was successful in one or two years' time and then developing action plans around that which are shared.

We funded a workforce development programme from Supporting Families Fund that I mentioned earlier that was really instrumental in getting people together to think about this common way of working and thinking about how to engage families, how to do assessments, if that was something that was needed.

Lead professional practice and some of the tools that we developed. We also trained staff on motivational interviewing and introduced a lot of agencies to systemic working as well through that.

And as people always say with multi-agency training, one of the benefits was they got to know their colleagues in the area and had a very real network and visited each other in their different offices and so on. So that's bringing things alive. We also tested new roles, so the Family Navigator has been a really important role that we developed through this process. They are a first point of contact for families who might come into the Family Hub for the first time. They have a multi-skilled team of people with different backgrounds, professional backgrounds, but they also link in with agencies like GPs and schools, so we can make sure that the message about what's available in Family Hubs is available to more families. And also, they model integrated working in terms of coordinating networks, acting as maybe the initial need professional, but also engaging other agencies in the plan. We had a shared outcomes plan and are developing that particularly over time, but we got a baseline from staff and also the community around the areas where we're developing hubs to sort of get their view on what it feels like to access services and respond to some of those messages. So, there was that sort of post five issue where the support wasn't available as it was before, and they also told us that we were really old fashioned. We were using digital tools and using too much paper. So that was one of the other messages we wanted to take forward. Information and data sharing has been something we have to focus on quite a lot. We haven't got 100% of the way there that we'd like to, but we've got a number of things in place that we can share more information about families within Family Hubs. And we also developed a digital tool where any agency can register a family with a Family Hub. And also, we can develop a family plan online again. Any agency can do that, families can contribute to it and the plans can be shared digitally. And then just more generally, which a lot of joining the dots. So, I talked about universal services linking with schools and GPs. We got a really big programme at the moment on transforming the way we support families from pre-birth to five and developing a more consistent approach to that and innovating where we can. And Family Hubs are a really big part of that programme. We're also doing that across two boroughs. So, Kensington and Chelsea also have Family Hubs. And just a really good way to kind of focus a lot of agencies on shared outcomes of new roles that whole family approach and lead professional working and so on. We've linked into the youth agenda. I suppose one of the issues is for young people aged in their teens. Do they would they want to go to Family Hubs? We hope so, and they have come to some of the programmes that have been put on. But also we do have youth hubs which are sort of partnered up with our Family Hubs. And the managers of the youth hubs also attend the local integrated leadership team,

encouraging them to think about whole family working and making sure we link in together.

We've also planned transitions from primary to secondary school in the last year through Family Hubs. So, identifying children who might have difficulties and then coming up with a multi-agency plan to support them again with a lead practitioner to make sure that they have good activities to do over the summer holidays and then support when they go to secondary school for the first time.

And I talked about Bi-borough working as well. It's been really useful to have two boroughs working on a similar agenda but allowing some difference. And I think that's one of the benefits is going to come out of the days like today when we're expanding that even further. And finally, sort of communications and branding as well. So, our Family Hubs look slightly different to the buildings they used to be. The insides are very, very different and we have things like shared logos, which we can really enforce that idea of an Early Help system.

I'm just going to pass over to Catherine, and I was going to talk a bit about Bessborough which is our first Family Hub, which opened in 2018 and how that's working in practice.

### **Catherine Drake Wilkes - 00:25:19**

- Thanks, Steve. Yes, we moved our existing children's centre into a building which was known in the community where our colleagues from midwifery and health visiting and social work and targeted Early Help were already based, but perhaps worked still quite separately even though they were in the same building. And that's where bringing in an integrated leadership team was really essential because staff on the ground who work with families can see how integration is going to help.

And often very senior managers can see how integration will be beneficial and avoid duplication. But when you're a team leader or a manager of a service or a voluntary sector organisation, you have a responsibility to look out for your staff and to think, well, hang on.

What are they being asked to do? Is their role changing or are they going to be given extra work?

We can't do this. So, it's that level of manager that we needed to join together and really think about how we all work together. We thought about how the building could work better.

That's still a work in progress, I have to say. But we have learnt from our first pilot Family Hub as we've developed our next one at Portman in the Edgware Road

area. We're working with old buildings that were built in the thirties and we're very glad that they were, and they've been changed various times over the years, but We wanted families to feel as though it's somewhere they feel comfortable to come. And with such a wide age remit, we want young people to feel that it's a place for them and not just a place for little children and babies. So, we are constantly rethinking that.

The main thing, of course, is the coordinated support, the fact that families can come in and feel as though they're not going to be passed from pillar to post. And everyone has alluded to this. We feel as though we're taking a real step forward in that, that we do have a single plan for a family, that professionals will, behind the scenes, talk to each other and work out the issues within different service remits. Can you go on to the next one? Thank you.

We've had since we started integration has had to make sense on the ground, and we've had a number of challenges as everyone has. Just the sheer number of families that each of the Family Hubs is working with in Westminster, how is it possible even with all family navigators to provide the right level of support to all the families who need it.

So, that makes it really important to think about the role of the lead professional and to build that capacity in all of the services so that people feel confident that it's something they can do, and it's not a lot of extra work that's being pushed on to them.

Of course, Covid has happened during the time that we've been developing our hubs, and a lot of the things that we put in place in Bessborough were, for example, birth registrations, parenting courses, family therapy clinic, housing advice. Or all of those things that you would have happening in a busy hub, had to go virtual. And what does a hub mean, then? And so as in all of our services, we had to be quite agile and actually embrace technology. It forced us to do that, we were made to. None of our hubs closed during the pandemic, and it was important to have somewhere that families who felt they were in danger and needed somewhere to go had somewhere.

So, we had staff who actually live in Westminster or very close by, who were able to be in. Offering a service and posting out resources to families.

And it seemed to really bring the partners in the hub closer together because it was a crisis and we had to think, how are we going to get everyone through it?

So, we had services, for example, who had most of their staff on furlough, but they had a space, so they were able to say, well, if your staff are still working, they could come here to see a family. It's a bigger space, they'll be able to socially distance.

We had lots of examples of families in crisis during that time. Where they didn't really meet the remit for a service, but people would say,

OK, we'll do something I can see they need it. So, it really helped us to have that partnership as a living example. And it's something we take from that. I think it's interesting our brains resist being in that crisis mode for too long. I think it's probably a self-preservation thing that we quite quickly revert to sort of feeling as though this is normal now. But I think those links that we forged really have stood us in good stead since then.

Another example of how we've been able to be quite responsive and flexible to need is the number of asylum seekers who were placed in hotel accommodation. During the pandemic, and they were not able to be moved on to more suitable accommodation as quickly as we would normally have hoped. So, the Home Office placed them there. Families were living in one room throughout the lockdown, not really knowing any of the local services, not knowing what was going on in some cases with Covid in very, very stressful situation.

So, we were fortunate that we had brought in a family navigator to work in our Family Hub close to three of those hotels to pick up the need there and really coordinate a team around that hotel. So, all the 'seagulls' were sweeping down on the hotel, professionals rather than the families, to continue Camilla's analogy. And really think about which organisations could support and how we could do something safely to actually meet the very practical needs of those families and that need is still there.

There were just so many asylum seekers in the system that we still have a large number of them placed in Westminster, and we're thinking about how we can balance those needs and maintain that support. Better to go to the next one. So, this is just to come up with an example of how a family experience integration and what difference it makes for them. And this was a 13 year old girl who has two adult siblings, one still living at home and both her parents.

And she was referred into the front door of children's services in Westminster by a referrer who was worried that mum had experienced emotional abuse from the father, and what impact that was having on the daughter.

So, this was felt it didn't need to go to a social work team or even a targeted Early Help team, but we could do some real early intervention work from our family navigator team. What the navigator discovered was that memory issues had been described for the dad but he actually, very sadly, has a rapidly deteriorating form of dementia.

And this is what was leading him to act in a very uncharacteristic way and in a way that hadn't taken place throughout the marriage.

This was obviously very, very difficult for the whole family, and there was a very difficult relationship between mum and daughter. Mum really wanted to protect her daughter from everything, but this was leading to quite a lot of concern about her emotional well-being. I feel with this audience, I want to pay tribute actually to a

member of the team around the family, who is another young person who is very, very mature and explained to this girl that he was very worried about her, and he needed to talk to safeguarding professionals in his school because he understood that she might end her friendship with him. But he needed to keep her safe. So, the family navigator really became the focal point of contact for the family in this network, and it became quite a large network, including the school, the school nurse, adult social care, hospital teams, dementia nurses, befriending. So, lots and lots of very important 'seagulls' who needed to do their role in caring for a very unwell man, and the impact on his family. But the navigator was the person that both mum and daughter could go to, and she was coordinating the links with that network, which included care planning meetings in hospital, for example, but working in a systemic way on the relationship between the mum and daughter. And they both now feel that they can communicate better with each other and that they can negotiate this difficult time in their family life in a more positive way. So, I think that's the end, we've probably talked for too long. But I'm going to hand over.

Oh, no, next steps, sorry. Where are we going next? So, we do have to open our third permanent Family Hub site, which is up in the northwest of our locality. And that's quite exciting because that will be a site that wasn't one of our former children's centres or health centres. It will be a chance to design it and more co-design from the community.

But the hub is still working up there in a virtual way. So, all of the integrated leadership team is there, the navigator is there, but they will move to a more purpose designed building. At the moment, we're very taken up with redesigning the pre-birth to five pathway, in a very much more integrated way, thinking about everything from first contact with midwifery services through early years. And although that isn't the 0-19, we're very much a part of that, and it does take into account those issues that Camilla mentioned with commissioning because previously commissioning timetables haven't been always the same as ours. So, there is a lot of work going on, and our children's centre and our health visiting teams, for example, will be employed as part of the same teams, even though they have different employers.

So, it is going to be a big change coming next year for us, and it takes the next logical step towards integration. We do need to renew our workforce development and take that more in-house so that it's more sustainable so that practitioners are able to lead on that, and managers are able to deliver workforce development in a tiered way.

So new members of staff will get induction. People who can be lead professionals can get lots of support around that role and those professionals who are really experienced and have been doing essentially this work for a long time, cannot just

learn the same things over again, but that can actually be developed and who can have really value added to their experience.

Camilla touched on an outcomes framework that has been a challenge that we've been grappling with, and we're continuing to develop that.

Covid recovery. I think we need to look at what worked well during the pandemic. Actually, some families have engaged better virtually. What are the things we want to keep? What are the hybrid ways of working that mean we can be more agile? But who's fallen through the gaps, who's really struggled? And I think some of the economic impacts of the pandemic are going to be with us for some time. We're continuing to try to be smarter at targeting people who need us most and to do that before they come to us. So, to actually use some of the data we have And be able to actually predict need rather than be more reactive. And why we're here today really sort of engaging and learning from others because there's so much good work going on throughout the country on Family Hubs, which we've always experienced and had really good dialogue.

So, we definitely wanted to do more of that. Thank you, everyone, for listening.

I would like to welcome you and thank you for joining us today. It's wonderful to have you all here. My name is Peter Fonagy, and I'm Chief Executive of the Anna Freud and Head of the Division of Psychology and Language Sciences at University College London.

Rated as one of the top five psychology departments in global rankings, and it has very close working relationship with Anna Freud. I have the honour to introduce this important launch event about the National Centre for Family Hubs.

[00:00:40]

I'm delighted to be hosting this virtual conference about implementing Family Hubs against the backdrop of the autumn Budget statement, in which the Chancellor, Rishi Sunak, announced the additional commitment of £500 million for family support, including £82 million to be given to further 75 local authorities to set up Family Hubs.

[00:01:11]

Today's event will launch the pilot of the Family Hubs Implementation Toolkit, a collection of co-produced resources aimed at supporting local authorities and other Family Hub providers to implement the Family Hub model in their local area. We have an extraordinary line up of speakers, and I'm grateful to all of

them for making themselves available today to share with us the latest research, practice material as well as lived experience.

[00:01:49]

I'm proud that the Department for Education has chosen the Anna Freud to host and lead the National Centre for Family Hubs in collaboration with our evidence partners, the Early Intervention Foundation. We are promoting this model because of the impact we already know integrated models can have on infants, children, young people and families. Particularly on those who have experienced exclusion due to socioeconomic inequalities.

[00:02:25]

The world expert on business competition, Michael Porter, of the Harvard Business School in Reimagining Health Care, recommended a shift from today's siloed care organisation, by specialty and discrete services to organising around the clients' or families' needs.

[00:02:49]

He called such structures integrated practice units. The Family Hub is a kind of integrated practice unit where staff from different services work together, regularly as a team toward a common goal, maximising the family's overall outcomes as efficiently as possible. They are experts in their specialty but can coordinate easily to minimise wasted time and resources. They meet frequently, formally, and informally, to improve support and care, by establishing new protocols and devising better or more efficient ways to engage with families.

The Family Hubs Implementation Toolkit supports just this kind of integration. But the work is not done. The toolkit is in pilot phase, at the start of an iterative co-produced development schedule.

[00:04:04]

We want to use this event to hear feedback from participants on what is helpful, what is missing, and what needs to change to enable effective implementation of Family Hubs in all areas. Our approach as the National Centre, is to ensure that our work is practice-led, evidence-based and is informed by families' lived experience. This means we cannot do it alone. Fantastic practice already exists, up and down the country. And we want to spread this and generate a stronger evidence base through a process of co-production and continued learning. Bringing people together is our role.

The National Centre wants to bring people together and connect a variety of sectors. Whether it's working with partners from education, children's social care, the mental health sectors, or voluntary and community groups. It is relational practice that informs the way we work.

[00:05:31]

Since we have been commissioned, we have prioritised listening to a range of voices that make up what Family Hubs are, and what they could become. A central access point to services and support that reflect the needs of the local population.

Today, you will hear from practitioners, evidence-based experts, parents, young people and local authority leaders who have helped to shape this toolkit, in a range of plenaries and workshops.

[00:06:16]

Since I first started training and practicing as a clinical psychologist and psychoanalyst in the 1980s, a lot has changed in both the social and policy arena, regarding the rights, roles, and responsibilities of the many people that are involved in raising children. And as a mental health advisor for government, I have experienced the frustration of non-joined up working and how much value integration can add to service offers.

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The COVID 19 pandemic has further exacerbated existing inequalities within our society and has placed extraordinary pressures on families across the board and contributed to worsening mental health, particularly in young people. Whilst this launch event will not focus on the impact of COVID 19 specifically, we cannot ignore the current context in which we are living and how this is affecting the families we are talking about today. My clinical research career has been around the early years.

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Evidence accumulated over decades speaks to the positive impact that early intervention can have on health and well-being and long-term outcomes for babies, infants, children, and young people as they progress into adulthood. In a study I was involved in, spanning 40 years, we showed that those individuals who had enriched input in their early years, when tested as adults, showed greater generosity and concern about the experience of the person they were interacting with, than those without enriched input.

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What is more, their brain activity during the interaction reflected this. So, we can see the difference early experience makes. Many of us here today will have been part of the evolution of Family Hubs and seen the critical part that Sure Start and children's centres have played.

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This focus on pregnancy and early years is essential but must respond to a changing context of complex local systems, understand the gaps in knowledge and ultimately find out what works efficiently and effectively for infants, children, young people and families.

Resources are limited for all of us. It behoves us to make sure that we have the use, to the greatest effect, of all of these. It's in this context that I'm pleased to introduce this event, which gives us the opportunity to think together about how to do this well.

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And so, to start us off, I'm delighted and honoured to hand over to Will Quince, Parliamentary Under Secretary for Children and Families. To those of us working with children, he is the minister, and we are delighted to have such a brilliant and energetic person in this vital role.

[00:10:17]

So, Minister Quince, over to you.

Minister Will Quince – [00:10:24]

Peter, thank you very much indeed, and good morning and thank you for your kind words and for inviting me to join you today. I'm so excited to be here for this launch event, and I'm delighted to have been appointed, just a handful of weeks into the job as the new Minister for Children and Families at the Department for Education.

It's a role that I am hugely excited about and take enormous pride in. Education, and I think in particular early years, are at the very heart of the levelling up agenda. And this is that the most incredible opportunity to play my part in ensuring that every child and every young person can go on to achieve their potential.

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And of course, not only does it start with, but at its very heart, is the family. The Children's Commissioner undertook a big exercise called the Big Ask, which launched in April of this year. It surveyed over half a million children, an incredible number. So, half a million children and young people, found that one of the things that they care most deeply about was being part of a happy home. And at the heart of a happy home is a loving family.

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Now, I know that staff and professionals in local authorities, in education settings, in charities and health and community organisations work tirelessly to help families. And the pandemic over the past 18 months or so has made this challenge all the greater.

So, before I go any further Peter, I'd like to thank you, and in fact, all of you on this Zoom for all of your hard work and dedication. Because it's your drive and your commitment. It's so hugely important and it's valued not only by those of us that work in government, but by the thousands of families that you help on a daily basis.

[00:12:21]

I'm looking forward very much to working with you all as we look to improve the life chances of children and young people. So, let me start by saying why the government is championing Family Hubs as a way to do just that. And at their simplest, a Family Hub is where families and children of all ages know they can go and get help and support. They may go to a building, or they may access that help online.

Or maybe, most probably a mix of the two and the exact service offer will vary from place to place as it should, reflecting the needs of the local population. But will have a great start to life offer for parents, carers, and babies at its very core.

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And of course, this in and of itself, as Peter alluded to, is not a new idea. We have had family services, family support units, children's centres for many years. But I think the Family Hub model builds on what we've learnt, what local councils and professionals have learnt and what families have told us about how to give them the best possible support we can, the support that they really very much deserve.

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And this is, in my view, summarised in three principles that characterise and define Family Hubs. Access, connections and relationships. So, let me start with access. We know how crucial it is that families know where to go for support and that we make it as easy as possible for them to find help when they need it.

And Family Hubs bring together services to support families from conception, and all the way up to young people of 19, or even up to 25 for those with special educational needs and so can respond to the needs of the whole family.

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They create a clear access point and a relationship with services that does not end as children get older. And Family Hubs allow for both physical and virtual services to be brought under one banner around which communications and outreach can be built.

So, that all important building of awareness and, absolutely critically, trust among families. And we've seen the value of online services and access points, and these are absolutely integral to this model. But we know that access to face-to-face services remain as crucial as ever, especially as we come out of the worst of the pandemic.

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And so, the Family Hub building will very much remain at the heart of family help. So as an example of this, in my neighbouring county of Suffolk, in Suffolk County Council, which is one of our research partners, they've identified a need for better reach and engagement, in particular with vulnerable families.

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And they're working to ensure that families see the Hub as a positive place to go for children of all ages, not somewhere that you just go when you have a particular problem. An effective hub almost acts as a single front door, a point of contact, making it easier for families to navigate, what can I appreciate be at times and certainly seen as, a pretty complex system.

So, that aim is to make the Family Hub a non-stigmatising access point for universal services, such as those absolutely crucial Start for Life services with additional help on offer for those who need it the most.

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The second principle is about connection. Family Hubs make it easier for families to know how and where to get help. Then connection is key to ensuring that they get what they need. And now this is partly about co-location, so bringing services together on a smaller number of sites.

But while physical proximity can be important and helpful, that alone does not create the joined-up services that families need. That only comes from effective governance, professional development, data sharing, which is so, so important, and integrated assessment case management and shared outcomes.

Now, of course, this is not what the phrase "family hub" should call to the minds of those who use them. That's for the likes of us to worry about. But family should feel it in their experience, their lived experience as Peter said, of using the hub, they tell their story once and then they're connected to the multitude of support and help that they need.

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And it's not just support through the local authority that should be available through the hub. The hub should connect families with services and support from others in a really joined up way.

And whether that is links to more targeted health services, links with schools, with education settings, the Department for Work and Pensions, from charities or community groups or even other parents, it's really, really important. And in my own county of Essex, some families received conflicting advice from professionals, and the County Council has sought to address this as part of the Family Hub model and trust between professionals and families has increased.

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Now, this leads me to the final principle, which is one of relationships. Now, the Family Hub model prioritises the relationships that carry us all through life and building on family strengths, recognising that this is the best way to lasting change.

This is the idea, it's very much at the heart of everything that is done. The principle reflects what Josh MacAlister has heard in his work as part of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care and captured in the Case for Change.

Family Hubs involve greater integration between the people, professionals and leaders that work with families. Local authorities with a hub model have used this to drive changes and improvement within their work with families, placing

a greater emphasis on relationships and sustaining these, as families and children grow.

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So, an example of this is Leeds, where building on community strengths and enhanced whole family working by professionals is absolutely key to their practice model. And I was so impressed when I saw a Family Hub in action last year.

I visited the Berechurch Family Hub, which is in Colchester in my own constituency, and I saw first-hand the help and services they provide to Colchester's families and children. And it's a massively welcoming environment with passionate staff, and I could see that it was making a real difference to the people that were using it.

So, what I've talked about today is not a blueprint that's been designed from scratch in a Whitehall department. It is the product of professionalism, endeavour, leadership and innovation of those in Colchester and Essex and around our country, and the government very much believes in the Family Hub model.

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So, what are we going to do now to drive this forward? So, one of the first steps we took was to establish the National Centre for Family Hubs, and this event today is a hugely important moment. The National Centre will provide expert advice and guidance and work with local authorities to champion the Family Hub approach.

I'm so grateful to the Anna Freud Centre and very much look forward to working with you. It's now all about delivery. We've been moving just now to the transformation funding that Peter mentioned. We've also announced a £12 million Family Hub's Transformation Fund, which will support around twelve local authorities in England to open Family Hubs.

And this first fund will enable us to learn more about the process of local transformation. It's really important that we build that evidence base and create valuable resources and learning for these local authorities who follow. Start for Life will be a key element of each of these projects, and I know you'll hear more about that from Dame Andrea Leadsom later on.

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And I'm really pleased to announce that from today, the fund is open to applications from local authorities, and we've also published the

Transformation Fund Application Guidance, which includes further information around the three principles for Family Hubs, which local authorities may find helpful in designing and developing their proposals.

Now, as I've set out, if we are to achieve our ambitions for Family Hubs, there are many behind the scenes challenges to overcome, so that families experience that effective, joined up service. Now, data and digital are absolutely key to that, and we're working with a number of local authorities to identify solutions, and our department have already started to begin this work with local authorities, including in Bristol and Lancashire.

And I'm delighted to announce that Salford, Suffolk and Tower Hamlets will join this stream of work following a successful second round of recruitment for this project. Now, having a strong evidence base is vital in making change effective and taking the right approaches, and our investment in and evaluation innovation fund is building this evidence base to help us understand what really works for Family Hubs and ultimately to improve the outcomes for children and families.

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And we've commissioned Ecorys UK to work with local authorities in Bristol and Essex, Leeds, Sefton, Suffolk and also Sheffield Hallam University to work with the local authority in Doncaster.

And we've today published some of the early learning from this work, which you will hear more about through colleagues at today's conference. So now for some even more exciting news, and Peter alluded to this too. You may have seen over the course of the past week, the Chancellor announced a significant £500 million package for families.

Now this includes a £300 million package to transform services for parents and babies, carers, and children in half of all of the local authorities across England. It will provide thousands of families with access to support when they need it and includes funding to create a family hub network for local authorities to publish their Start for Life offer, support for breastfeeding, parent infant relationships and parenting programmes.

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And this package also includes a smaller number of pilots to trial and evaluate innovative workforce models needed to support babies and families. Altogether, this will provide thousands of families with access to support when they need it, and we are delivering on the Best Start for Life report and on our manifesto commitment to champion Family Hubs.

And I have to say how very grateful I am to Dame Andrea Leadsom for this hugely important review and for her dedicated commitment to this work. And I'm proud that this package also goes even further, to deliver on our manifesto commitment to champion Family Hubs and to provide vulnerable families with the intensive integrated support that they need through the £200 million expansion of the Supporting Families programme. Now, more information on these significant investments will come soon.

Now, I want support for families to be a golden thread that runs through government and Dame Andrea and I will continue to work collaboratively to ensure that the critical thousand and one days are central to our work on Family Hubs.

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And we're also working very closely with other parts of government, such as the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with the Supporting Families programme and the Reducing Parental Conflict programme which is led by my old department, the Department for Work and Pensions.

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To conclude, let me finish by saying this. That today's event and the launch of the first £12 million Family Hubs Transformation Fund is very much the beginning of a conversation on Family Hubs. We know that there is so much more to do, to learn, and to build working with you all.

That's what we've published today, it's very, very far from the last word. In fact, it's quite the opposite and we want to hear from you and work with you, to make sure that we realise the potential of Family Hubs.

[00:24:46]

It is a hugely exciting time, so thank you for being here. Thank you for playing your part in this important agenda, and I will now hand back to Peter and Camilla, who will take you through the remainder of the conference.