

Family Help Partnership Strategy

2026-2029



Nottingham City Safeguarding
Children Partnership

Foreword

The Family Help Strategy is fundamental to realising the Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Partnership (NCSCP) vision. By focusing on earlier, more accessible and more coordinated support, the strategy directly contributes to our shared ambition for every child and young person in Nottingham City to have the best start in life, to grow, to thrive and to be prepared for a successful adult life.

Through strengthening early help pathways, reducing barriers to access, and building trusted, sustained relationships with families, the Family Help Strategy aims to ensure all children, including those with special educational needs, disabilities and other additional vulnerabilities, receive the right help at the right time to meet their individual needs, ensuring they receive support that is tailored, accessible and inclusive.

It creates the conditions for earlier identification of need, more targeted intervention and improved outcomes - helping prevent difficulties from escalating into statutory involvement. Equally, the strategy reinforces strong and effective partnerships across the local system. By bringing together education, health, social care, community organisations and the voluntary sector around a shared practice framework, it strengthens collective responsibility for safeguarding and wellbeing. This partnership approach is essential to improving safeguarding outcomes and ensuring families experience a coherent, joined-up offer of support.

Achieving this requires shared commitment. The strategy reflects the expertise and dedication of our staff, partners and communities, and it invites all of us to play an active role in shaping the future of family support. Together, we can create a system that empowers families, supports practitioners and delivers meaningful, measurable change.

We are proud to present this Family Help Partnership Strategy and look forward to the impact we will create, together, for children and families now and for generations to come.



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Introduction

This Family Help Strategy marks the evolution of Nottingham City's previous Early Help Strategy, reflecting both national reform and local ambition.

While Early Help remains a vital component of support for children and families, it is now strengthened and embedded within a broader and more integrated Family Help model.

Aligned with Nottingham City's Continuum of Need, [Safeguarding Children Partnership - Nottingham City Council](#) Family Help encompasses Universal, Early and Targeted Family Help. What was once delivered as standalone Early Help is now part of a seamless continuum that ensures families receive the right support at the right time from practitioners who work collaboratively and understand their needs.

Central to Family Help is the early identification of concerns, including those affecting children and young people with disabilities and special educational needs (SEND). By providing timely, proportionate support, the model aims to prevent difficulties from escalating and to reduce the need for statutory intervention wherever possible.

Across Nottingham City, Family Help creates a system that is responsive, connected, and guided by the voices of children, young people, and families—including those who communicate or engage differently due to SEND. It promotes resilience, reduces stigma, and supports children to thrive within their families, schools, and communities.

When there are different views about the level of support a child may need, it's important that these are explored through open, respectful conversations. Professionals are encouraged to work together, drawing on each other's knowledge and relationships with the child and family, to ensure timely and appropriate support is provided. The agreed escalation processes should be followed where necessary. You can find the escalation pathway here:

<https://nottinghamshirescp.trixonline.co.uk/chapter/escalating-for-the-right-outcome-conflict-resolution-and-professional-disagreement-policy?search=conflict>

The National Context

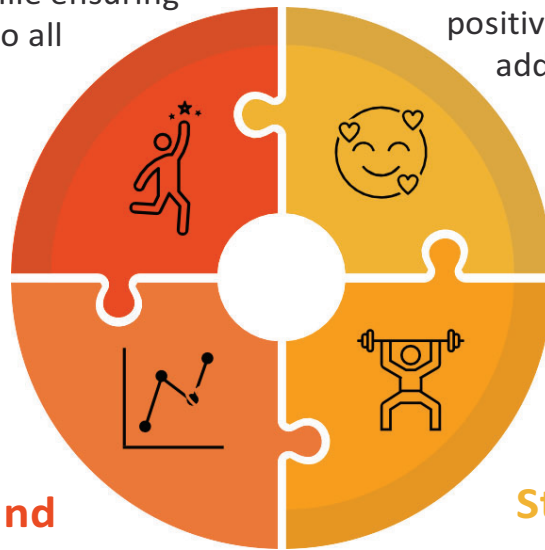
Our Family Help Strategy aligns with key national frameworks that shape support for children and families across England, creating a system that is child-centred, family-focused, and rooted in prevention.

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)

Strengthens multi-agency working across the whole system of support and protection, promoting a whole-family approach while ensuring the child remains central to all decision-making.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – Article 19

Places a duty on governments to protect children from maltreatment and support families to prevent harm, emphasising positive, respectful caregiving and addressing the wider causes of vulnerability.



Best Start for Life and Family Hubs

Best Start for Life sets the national ambition for improving outcomes in the first 1,001 days, supported through the Best Start Family Hubs network. Family Hubs provide joined-up, accessible, place-based support for families - bringing health, early years, SEND, parenting, and wider services together in one coherent local offer.

Stable Homes, Built on Love (2023)

Sets out national reforms across Children's Social Care and Early Help, emphasising the need for a strengthened Family Help offer that is timely, inclusive, and accessible.

Nottingham City Demographics

Nottingham is a young, mobile and culturally rich city with a resident population of approximately 329,300.

Around 67,500 children aged 0–17 live in the city, contributing to a median age significantly below the national average.

The population is also highly diverse: 42.7% of residents are from Global Majority communities, reflecting a strong multicultural identity.

**Nottingham:
a young,
diverse, and
vibrant City**

At the same time, the city faces significant challenges. The city has been identified as having one of the lowest Gross Disposable Household Incomes (GDHI) per person in the UK. Nottingham has higher-than-average rates of disability and long-term illness. The city also experiences substantial **population churn**, with many families moving in and out each year.

Nottingham's diversity strengthens **social cohesion**, fostering inclusion, mutual understanding and cultural richness. Its multicultural communities enrich the city's identity through food, festivals, art and language, making Nottingham a vibrant and attractive place to live and work. The city's young demographic provides a **strong future workforce**, supporting economic growth and attracting employers seeking adaptable, tech-savvy talent. Younger communities contribute to innovation, entrepreneurship and the development of fast-growing sectors such as digital, creative and knowledge-based industries. The presence of large student populations further supports skills development, research, and local job creation.

Implications for Family Help

High deprivation levels, increased disability and health needs, and high population mobility create **complex pressures for families**.

These factors mean the Family Help Strategy must prioritise:

Inclusion

Culturally responsive and inclusive practice, reflecting the city's diversity

Strong Pathways

Strong SEND and disability pathways to meet complex needs

Delivery

Place-based, community-centered delivery that strengthens networks

Enablement

Tackling inequalities and enabling families to thrive despite economic and social pressures

Flexibility

Early, accessible and flexible support



Shaping our Strategy

Children and young people's voices are central to shaping the future of Family Help in Nottingham. Their experiences, insights and aspirations have informed the priorities within the strategy. By listening closely to what matters most to them, we can ensure services are more accessible, more responsive and more effective.

Children and young people overwhelmingly told us that the things that matter most right now are:

Connection

Having services that help them make friends and feel connected

Learning

Being able to access support and advice about education and learning



Wellbeing

Receiving support for their physical and mental health and wellbeing

They said:

'There needs to be a place for young people to get advice and guidance about education, work and health, including their mental health.'

'I want to feel safe and know where I can go to get help in my community.'

'It's important to have spaces where everyone is welcome and valued and can ask for help without being judged.'

'Children and young people need spaces they can go to get support without stigma.'



Shaping our Strategy

Parents and Carers told us that the things that matter most to them right now are:

Help

Help with managing their child's behaviour and relationships

Support

Access to parenting advice and support



Opportunities

Opportunities for learning, education, training, and support with health and wellbeing

They said:

'For our family, it has been very important to give our child opportunities to be social with other children, as well as us as parents. It is important we can access professional advice, which is always reassuring.'

'We do not have any other family or friends in the area so it is important for us to be able to access activities and support.'

'I would like to see more support for children with behavioural issues and parents who need to manage this, as it can be tiring and emotionally challenging.'

'We are flexible as parents and keen to learn as much as possible so it is important that there is good support services out there for us as a family.'

'I have young adult children and finding the right support for them has been hard e.g. further training, finding jobs, CV support.'



Delivering Change: Our Core Priorities

Our priorities set out the key areas where we will focus our collective efforts to strengthen Family Help and improve outcomes for children, young people and families in Nottingham City. These priorities reflect what local families, practitioners and partners have told us matters most, and they provide a clear framework for driving effective, sustainable change across the system.

PRIORITY 1
STRENGTHEN WHOLE
FAMILY RESILIENCE
AND PROMOTE
POSITIVE PARENTING

PRIORITY 2
IMPROVE CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE'S HOLISTIC
DEVELOPMENT.



PRIORITY 4
IMPROVE DATA SHARING
AND DATA USE ACROSS
FAMILY HELP SERVICES
TO SUPPORT
CONTINUOUS
IMPROVEMENT

PRIORITY 3
STRENGTHEN
PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Priority 1

Strengthen whole-family resilience and promote positive parenting

What will be the impact on infants, children, young people and families?

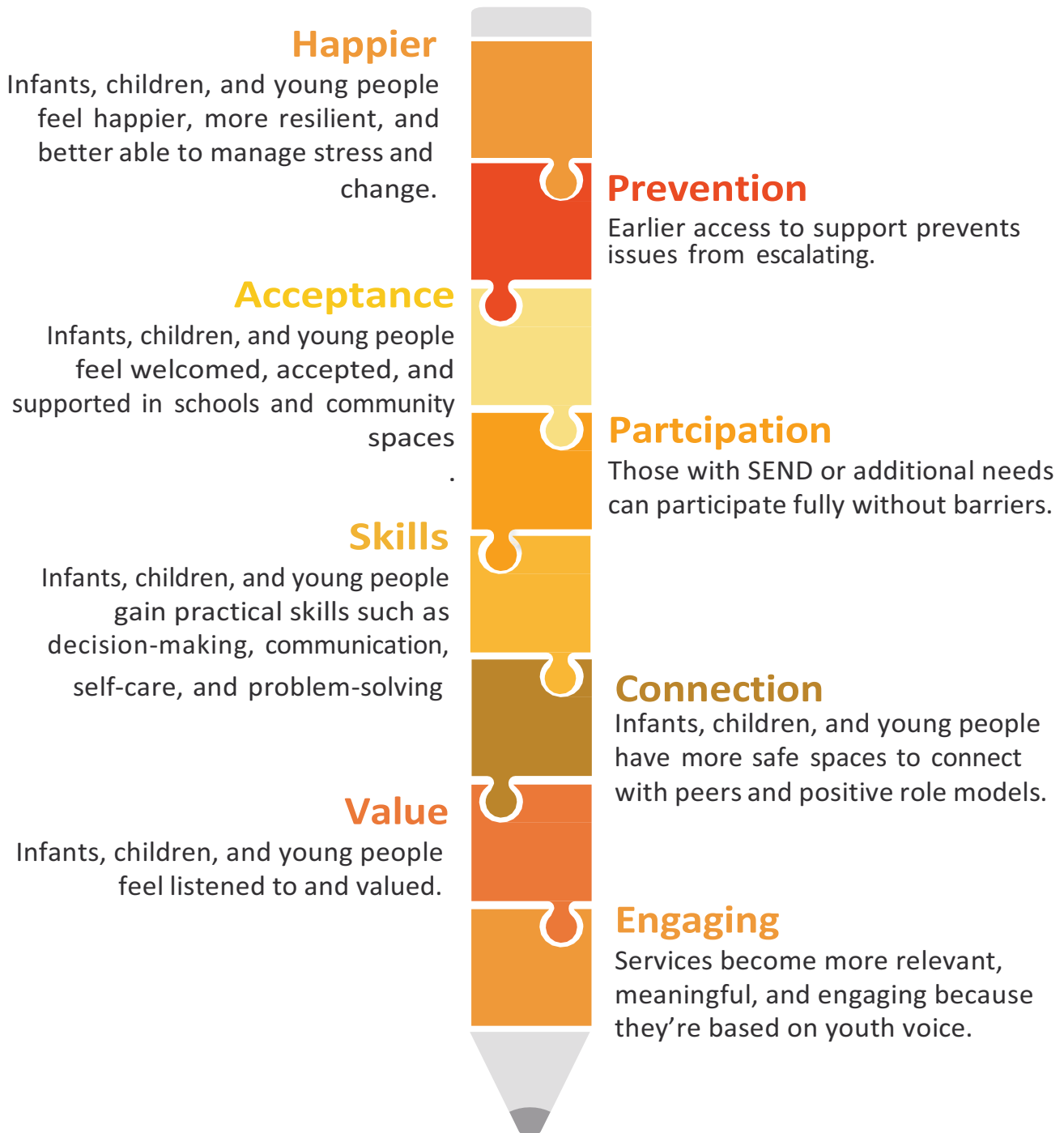


Positive impact on infants, children, young people and families

Priority 2

Improve infants, children and young people's holistic development - *Supporting wellbeing, relationships and life skills alongside academic outcomes.*

What will be the impact on infants, children, young people and families?



Positive impact on infants, children, young people and families

Priority 3

Strengthen partnership working – *to create a coordinated, high quality Family Help system that is proactive, accessible, and shaped by children, young people and families.*

What will be the impact on infants, children, young people and families?



Positive impact on infants, children, young people and families

Priority 4

Priority 4 – Improve data sharing and data use across Family Help Services share information and use their data to support continuous improvement.

What will be the impact on infants, children, young people and families?

Identification

Improved data sharing and analysis helps services identify emerging concerns earlier, meaning children receive support sooner and are less likely to reach a point of crisis

Identification

Better use of shared data supports more consistent, evidence-informed decision-making across services, meaning infants, children, young people and families receive fairer, more appropriate support regardless of which service they first access.

Coordinated

Families benefit from timelier, coordinated support, reducing the need for repeated interventions and improving their overall experience of services.



Positive impact on infants, children, young people and families

Early Family Help

Most children and families will never encounter specialist or statutory services, and their needs are usually met through universal and community services.

These services ensure families can access the right support at the earliest opportunity, within their local areas and usually prevent concerns escalating, helping families to help themselves, and preventing the need to access more specialist or statutory services. In Nottingham City, these services are provided by lots of different agencies that can include but not limited too, voluntary and community organisations, faith groups, child minders and nurseries, schools, colleges; GPs, midwives, health visitors, 0 to19 public health nursing services, youth services, Housing Services. In some circumstances these services may be the starting point for a family requiring information, advice, and support.

Some children and young people are likely to need extra help to be healthy, safe and achieve their full potential. They are usually best supported on a voluntary basis, by those already working with them such as Family Hubs, children centres, various health professionals or schools. These services are well placed to recognise, co-ordinate and respond when Family Help may be necessary so that support is coherent and addresses family vulnerabilities early.

At this stage, a Team Around the Family (TAF) may be established to coordinate a collaborative response to the emerging needs of children, young people, and their families and a lead professional who knows the family best will co-ordinate the support. Lead Professionals can access support and guidance from the dedicated Team Around the Family Workers, who are based in the Family Hubs and who are able to offer sign posting and advice to support the work of the Lead Professional.



Targeted Family Help

Targeted Family Help is provided when families need additional support from the Nottingham City Councils Family Help Services. Families or professionals can access this support via the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) at Nottingham City Council.

Where it is identified that a family requires support in addition to what is in place or could be provided by universal or community services and the criteria for Child in Need is not met, support can be provided by a dedicated Family Help Worker, who will offer one-to-one support to the family.

Where these unmet needs relate to a child aged 10 or over, and are connected to exploitation, missing incidents, anti-social behaviour (ASB), criminality, or education concerns, this support may be provided by a Family Help Worker from the Adolescence Service.

If a TAF is already in place, the Core or Adolescence Family Help Worker will join the existing multi-agency group to strengthen and coordinate support.

If there is no TAF, the Family Help Worker will complete a strengths-based assessment to understand the family's holistic needs, identify the support network around them, and establish a multi-agency TAF that includes other relevant services and professionals.



How we will know our model is working

We will know our Family Help model is effective when we see clear, measurable improvements in the lives of children, young people, and families. Progress will be monitored through key data, professional insight, and - most importantly - the voices and experiences of families. Their feedback will guide ongoing learning and improvement and ensure support remains responsive and effective.

When Family Help is working well in Nottingham City, we expect to see:

Fewer children needing statutory intervention, including reductions in Child in Need, child protection plans, and children entering care.

Improved early childhood outcomes, with more children achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) and school readiness (target: 75%).

Fewer young people who are NEET or whose destination is unknown.

Fewer fixed-term and permanent exclusions.

Better school attendance and attainment.

A growing body of case studies and real-life narratives demonstrating positive impact and highlighting effective practice.

Regular, meaningful co-design with families, children, young people, and professionals to shape and strengthen Family Help.

Lower levels of youth offending.

Reductions in children experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Improvements across key child health indicators.

Reduced exploitation of children and young people.



Governance

Our Partnership Family Help strategy is reliant upon collaboration with professionals, families and communities. Together we are committed to providing an inclusive and accessible Family Help offer for all our families, children and young people. For the Strategy to be successful, everyone who knows a child or young person needs to understand what Family Help is, and that getting the right help at the right time, especially early on, is crucial to the wellbeing of our children and young people.

Current operational partnership arrangements will oversee the ongoing development and delivery of the Family Help Strategy and will be overseen by the Family First Partnership Steering Group which brings together a broad representation of partners across the system. The Steering Group will provide reports and recommendations to the overarching governance board, Strategic Oversight and scrutiny will be provided by the Family First Governance Board ensuring clear accountability and strategic direction. The Family Help Strategy will be formally reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it remains relevant, effective and aligned with national expectations and local priorities.

