

Meeting of:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	Monday, 08 November 2021
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Healthy Living and Social Care
Report Title:	External Funding – Families First
Purpose of Report:	To seek Cabinet approval to undertake a tendering exercise to enter into a contract to support the delivery of the Families First Plan in the Vale of Glamorgan
Report Owner:	Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health
Responsible Officer:	Director of Social Services
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Cabinet Member, Social Care and Health; Head of Children and Young People Services; Head of ALN and Wellbeing; Operational Manager, Accountancy; Operational Manager, Legal Services; Operational Manager, Children and Young People Services.
Policy Framework:	The recommendations of this report are within existing policy framework and budget and is a matter for Executive decision.
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report seeks Cabinet approval to undertake a procurement exercise for the delivery of a number of early intervention and support services. • Cabinet will also be aware that a number of the projects are directly provided by the Council. 	

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet notes and supports the utilisation of the Families First grant.
2. That authority is given to the Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Head of Children and Young People Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health to negotiate and execute appropriate contractual arrangements with delivery partners, including where re-tendering is required, to ensure the provision of a Families First Plan as described in paragraphs 2.2 and 2.3.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To ensure Cabinet is aware of, and supports, how the grant is being used to deliver Families First in the Vale of Glamorgan.
2. To obtain the authority of Cabinet to enter into appropriate contractual arrangements with delivery partners in furtherance of the Families First Plan.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Families First Plan was initially developed in 2012 and focussed on a support network of provision and services aligned to a 'team around the family' approach.
- 1.2 Families First Programme Guidance was refreshed in 2017 and reaffirmed the requirement to maintain the 'team around the family' model; described as Families Achieving Change Together (FACT) in the Vale of Glamorgan and to maintain services within the criteria for a Disability Focus. It also highlighted a step change within its priorities for commissioned services moving away from a wide range of bespoke services to a clear focus on parent support services and support for young people.
- 1.3 In 2018 the Families First Management Board approved the creation of three new teams: The Vale Parenting Team, Wellbeing Youth Mentoring Team and the Families First Advice Line (FFAL). All went live from April 2018, with a formal launch in October 2018. The merger of previously existing projects brought together projects with similar aims and target groups and allowed the Management Board an opportunity to test new ways of working.
- 1.4 Seven distinct projects exist under the Families First Plan during 2020-21:
 - FACT – delivered by Social Services
 - Families First Advice Line (FFAL) – delivered by Social Services
 - Disability Focus – internally delivered and externally commissioned
 - Parenting –delivered by Social Services

- Youth Wellbeing –delivered by Learning and Skills
 - Young Carers – externally commissioned
 - Central co-ordination – internally delivered within Learning and Skills.
- 1.5** In April 2019 Welsh Government (WG) established the Children and Communities (CCG) Grant. This grant absorbed Families First and encompassed six other grants; Flying Start, Legacy Fund, Promoting Positive Engagement for Young People, St. David’s Day Fund, Communities for Work Plus and Childcare and Play. This new integrated funding stream has remained in place for the whole of the Assembly term and has been helpful for the sharing of resources between grants although all maintain their separate identities and guidance. The grant has remained subject to annual confirmation and at the discretion of ministerial approval.
- 1.6** During 2020/21, Welsh Government have been providing additional funds to address issues generated by the COVID-19 pandemic and reduce waiting lists to existing services. Additional services have been created in direct response to these additional funds.
- 1.7** Funds within the CCG allocated for Families First based projects are likely to remain the same as a minimum for the rest of the Welsh Government term. It is highly likely that these funds will increase as the services provided directly respond to the need to recover following COVID-19 and in doing so reduce demand on higher level public services.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1** The focus of the funding is to build on the new requirements and to refresh the current Families First Plan to be submitted to Welsh Government early in 2022.
- 2.2** It is proposed the funding is utilised to deliver the following existing and distinct projects:
- Team Around the Family project (FACT) - internally commissioned and delivered via Social Services.
 - Disability Focus - internally and externally recommissioned; Inclusive youth provision, travel training and ILS.
 - Young Carers - externally commissioned.
 - Wellbeing Youth Mentoring Service - Internally commissioned and delivered via Learning and Skills.
 - Parent Support Project - Internally commissioned and delivered via Social Services.
 - Families First Advice Line - Internally commissioned and delivered by FACT (Social Services).
 - Central Coordination – internally delivered.

- 2.3** Additional funding has allowed for the expansion of existing projects and the establishment of additional projects. It is further proposed subject to increased Welsh Government funding that these additional projects are also delivered:
- Child mentoring service (externally commissioned)
 - Family support programme for children with ASD (externally commissioned)
 - Domestic Abuse project (externally commissioned).
- 2.4** The proposals for the use of Families First funding are in line with the well-being objectives in the Public Services Board's Well-being Plan, in particular the well-being objective 'to give children the best start in life'.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1** All Families First projects work to support the Five Ways of Working and the Well-being Outcomes.
- 3.2** Welsh Governments Families First guidance (2017) places a strong focus on early intervention and prevention and actively promotes integration and collaboration as ways of working. Each of the local projects undertakes various methods of gathering users' feedback (both service users and that of professionals) to help focus future developments. Funding is agreed on an annual basis, but the ethos is one of longer-term sustainable impact on the delivery of services.
- 3.3** Families First projects contribute to:
- Well-being Outcome 1: An inclusive and safe Vale. Objective 1: Reducing Poverty and social exclusion.
 - Well-being Outcome 3: An Aspirational and Culturally Vibrant Vale. Secure improved outcomes for groups of learners at risk of under-achievement, such as those entitled to free school meals.
 - Well-being Outcome 4: An Active and Healthy Vale. Objective 7: Encouraging and promoting active healthy lifestyles. Work in partnership to deliver a comprehensive play programme that improves the wellbeing of children and their families.

4. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 4.1** The Children and Communities Grant Delivery Plan approved by Welsh Government on the basis the Council will receive a grant of £4,524,723, this was increased in September 2021 with a particular focus on reducing waiting lists to Families First and Flying Start families increasing the award to £4,913,637.
- 4.2** The Families First award within CCG is £1,374,364 each year covering the financial year 2021/22. Welsh Government have made a commitment to

continuing with the current programmes and these funds will continue at this amount as a minimum for the life of this Government until 2026.

- 4.3** Individually contracted Families First projects will be required to have their own exit strategies. All Families First projects will be stringently monitored and evaluated so that opportunities to build upon and sustain the initiatives can be identified.
- 4.4** Families First is established and dependant on continued Welsh Government funding. The exit strategy will be the cessation of individual project(s) should funding reduce/cease. In the longer term it is envisaged by Welsh Government that consideration will be given to mainstreaming successful elements.

Employment

- 4.5** As revenue funding, Families First supports a range of internal and externally funded projects, all providers employ staff to deliver their project. Each project is monitored closely, and staff establishments are scrutinised by the Families First Management Board to ensure any growth in staffing is matched to project demand.
- 4.6** There are no direct workforce related implications associated with this report. However, if funding is reduced by Welsh Government in future years there could be implications on staff establishments.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 4.7** Contracts/service level agreements are in place with providers delivering Families First projects which set out clear roles, responsibilities and outcomes for the delivery of activities.
- 4.8** The Council has to satisfy its public sector duties and obligations under the Equality Act 2010 - all projects collect protected characteristics data to help ensure services are responding to need.
- 4.9** In accordance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language standards, the Council also has to consider the impact upon the Welsh language of any decision that it makes. Families First projects establish the language through which users wish to access the service and where possible services are provided through the medium of Welsh.
- 4.10** Families First projects also work to reduce crime and disorder by tackling the underlying causes of family and youth deprivation; targeting young people most at risk of becoming disengaged and not in education, employment and training (NEET) and providing opportunities to stay in education and training.

5. Background Papers

[Report to Cabinet – 9th October 2017.](#)

[Report to Healthy Living & Social Care Scrutiny Committee – 6th July 2021.](#)