

REPORT AUDIT TRAIL**CONSULTATION**

*This is important as it shows that consultation has been undertaken in the preparation of the report and provides a quick reference point for specific comments, whilst the report will not be publishable if these areas have not been completed by the named persons below. **You must liaise with and receive sign off from the relevant Cabinet Member(s).***

Name/Position	Portfolio/Ward/ Directorate	Date Sent	Date Received	Comments in para:
Councillor Victoria Cusworth	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People		09/06/25	
<i>Nicola Curley</i>	Assistant Chief Executive/ Strategic Director for Children and Young People's Services	03/10/25	09/06/25	
<i>Josh Amahwe</i> , Finance	Finance and Customer Services	22/09/25	29/09/25	
<i>Glenda Ashman</i> Legal Services	Legal Services	29/09/25	29/09/25	
<i>Name</i> , Amy Leech	Assistant Chief Executive's Office	22/09/25	25/09/25	
<i>Karen Middlebrook</i> Procurement	Finance and Customer Services	22/09/25	02/10/25	
<i>Name</i> , Equalities	Assistant Chief Executive's Office	Click here to enter a date.	Click here to enter a date.	
<i>Other officers below</i>		Click here to enter a date.	Click here to enter a date.	

REPORT APPROVAL TRACKING			
Equalities Your report will not be authorised for submission to Cabinet by your Strategic Director if you have not undertaken and included an initial equalities screening. All equalities analysis documents should be included as appendices	Initial Screening completed and included with report	NO	N/A
	Full Assessment completed and included with report	NO	N/A
Carbon Impact Assessments Carbon Impact Assessments are to be appended to the associated cabinet reports. Carbon Impact Assessments should be sent to climate@rotherham.gov.uk for feedback prior to your report being sent to your Strategic Director for approval.	Carbon Impact Assessment completed and included with report.	NO	N/A
Background information MANDATORY: Insert headings for a few main public documents you have used or referenced to write this report. This is a legal requirement. For Cabinet reports, <u>insert hyperlinks</u> . Do not list private documents.	Policy doc ABC Govt advice DEF Cabinet report GHI		
Appendices If appendices are essential to the understanding of the report, list titles here. Ensure that appendices have proper titles. List any appendices relevant to the decision being taken first with the Equality Analysis documents coming next and the Carbon Impact Assessment being listed as the last Appendix for all reports.	Appendix 1: Update on the Family Help Strategy in relation to The Families First Partnership (FFP) Programme Guide.		
Cabinet Member Approval You should retain an email confirming the Cabinet Member approval for your records. Strategic Directors should not authorise reports unless Cabinet Members have given sign off	YES/NO (delete as appropriate)	Click here to enter a date.	
Report Authorised by Strategic Director	YES/NO (delete as appropriate)	Click here to enter a date.	
Report Authorised for publication by Chief Executive	YES/NO (delete as appropriate)	Click here to enter a date.	

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Delegated Officer Decision – 22 September 2025

Report Title

Use of the new Children’s Social Care prevention grant to deliver transformation activity in line with the outcomes identified within Early Help Strategy, including the Families First Partnership Transformation Programme.

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No, but it has been included on the Forward Plan

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Nicola Curley, Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services

Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

In June 2025, Cabinet approval was granted for the use of the new Children’s Social Care prevention grant to deliver transformation activity (30%), increased direct delivery of family help (50%), practice development, workforce development and ICT development (15%) and children and family voice (5%).

Authority was delegated to the Strategic Director, Children and Young People’s Services in consultation with the Lead Member, Children and Young People and the Assistant Director Financial Services to determine the use of the new Children’s Social Care Prevention Grant in line with the expectations set out in the Families First Partnership Programme Guide.

This report provides an update on the use of the new Children’s Social Care Prevention Grant to deliver the transformation activity.

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet notes the delegated decisions taken by the Strategic Director, Children and Young People’s Services in consultation with the Lead Member,

Children and Young People and the Assistant Director Financial Services to determine the use of the new Children's Social Care Prevention Grant in line with the expectations set out in the Families First Partnership Programme Guide.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1: Update on the Family Help Strategy in relation to The Families First Partnership (FFP) Programme Guide.

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

None

Council Approval Required

Yes

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

1. Background

- 1.1 The Early Help Strategy: Family Help in Rotherham 2024-2029, approved by Cabinet in March 2024, was developed in response to revised government guidance, including the Department for Education (DfE) new edition 'Working Together to Safeguard Children December 2023'.
- 1.2 Following the launch of the Early Help Strategy: Family Help in Rotherham 2024-2029 in November 2024, the Government published 'Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive'. This policy statement set out the Government's ambitious approach to rebalancing the children's social care system toward earlier intervention through Family Help.
- 1.3 In February 2025, the government published the grant determination for the Children's Social Care Prevention Grant for 2025-26. This grant is for direct investment in additional prevention activity for children and families through the implementation of Family Help and Child Protection reforms. It is intended to fund local authorities to deliver against the planned new legislative duties. This grant does not replace the Children and Families Grant, which comprises previously Department for Education grants including Supporting Families and are intended to enable continuation of existing prevention services.
- 1.4 In March 2025, the Government published the Families First Partnership Programme Guide. The aim of the programme is to support safeguarding partners to implement Family Help and multi-agency child protection reforms and make greater use of Family Group Decision Making. The programme guide describes the vision and objectives and sets out the practice change Government expect to see to improve the support provided to children and their families. The timeline for delivery of the transformation is ambitious, with significant progress anticipated within this financial year.
- 1.5 In June 2025 Cabinet approval was granted for the use the new Children's Social Care prevention grant to deliver transformation activity in line with the expectations set out in the Families First Partnership Programme Guide.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The new Children's Social Care Prevention Grant has been used to deliver the necessary transformation activity.
- 2.2 Recruitment to the transformation team and commissioning of transformation activity £558,235 (28%):

Families First - Programme Lead Programme Lead (PO18)	£88,950
Families First – Participation Lead	£77,937

Families First - Project Support	£42,886
Partner organisations secondments from Police / health / Education	£150,000
Families First - Data / Performance Lead	£62,952
Sub-total	£422,725
0.5 Strategic Commissioning Manager	£32,835
0.5 Business Support	£16,092
Senior Project Officer	£57,722
0.5 BI Developer	£28,861
Sub-total	£135,510
Commissioned Needs Analysis	£19,484
Total	£558,235

2.3 Children and Family Voice £84,395 (4%):

Commissioned engagement and co-production work	£21,443
Families First - Communications Lead	£62,952
Sub-total	£84,395

2.4 ICT Development £307,000 (15%)

Data migration to support single system development	£307,000
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3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 That Cabinet notes the decisions taken by the Strategic Director, Children and Young People's Services, to determine the use of the new Children's Social Care Prevention Grant, as delegated by Cabinet in June 2025.

The decision supports the outcomes identified within Early Help Strategy, including the Families First Partnership Transformation Programme. This will ensure the Council is compliant with the recent legislative and policy change and is able to deliver its commitment in line with best practice to ensure effective services are in place for all children and young people in the Borough.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 All decisions taken by the Strategic Director, Children and Young People's Services, are in consultation with the Lead Member, Children and Young People and the Assistant Director Financial Services.
- 4.2 The Family First Partnership Programme governance structure ensures engagement and consultation with all key stakeholders. Public Health, Finance, HR, Marketing and Communications, ICB, South Yorkshire Police and Children and Young People's Services are represented. The Safeguarding Partners have been briefed; they are supportive of the transformation plan.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1	Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership Development session to take place in May.
5.2	Inaugural meeting of the Family First Partnership Programme Delivery Group in May/ June following Cabinet approval.
5.3	Inaugural meeting of the Family First Partnership Programme Executive Group in June/ July following Cabinet approval
5.4	Funding released to enable appointment to key transformation roles/functions following Cabinet approval in May.
5.5	Inaugural meetings of the workstream steering groups to take place in June. Progress against the required delivery is monitored by the Family First Partnership Programme Delivery Group.
5.6	A further update on the delivery of Phase 2 of the Early Help Strategy: Family Help including the Families First Programme Transformation, will be brought to Cabinet as planned in the Autumn.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications (to be written by the relevant Head of Finance and the Head of Procurement on behalf of s151 Officer)

- 6.1 A total of £2.210 million in grant funding has been allocated to the Council to support direct investment in additional prevention activities aligned with the implementation of the Family Help and Child Protection reforms.

Current full-year commitments related to transformation activities amount to £0.663m, which remains within the permissible threshold set out in the grant conditions. In accordance with these conditions, local authorities are required to limit expenditure on transformation activity to no more than 30% of the total grant allocation.

In addition to the above, a further £0.084m has been committed towards communications and stakeholder engagement (with local partners) to co-produce and design new service delivery models. The balance of funding (£1.463m) would be committed and used for service delivery across the full breadth of preventative services. The funding would be used to recruit additional workforce and to commissioned services to improve the local service offer for families and children.

6.2 As an update report there are no direct procurement implications associated with the recommendations detailed in this report.

7. Legal Advice and Implications (to be written by Legal Officer on behalf of Assistant Director Legal Services)

7.1 Section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 requires local authorities in their social services functions to act under the general guidance of the Secretary of State. Furthermore, under section 10 (8) and section 11 (4) of the Children Act 2004, local authorities are to have regard to any guidance given to them by the Secretary of State. It is under this legislation local authorities must also have regard to, Working Together to Safeguard Children, updated in 2023, which provides statutory guidance on how practitioners working with children, young people and their families should work together to ensure children and young people remain safe from harm. In addition, Children's Social Care National Framework, Dec 2023, sets out statutory guidance on the purpose, principles for practice and expected outcomes of children's social care.

7.2 Further statutory guidance was provided in November 2024, Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive, that focused on keeping families together when safe to do so, using wider family members or foster carers instead of resorting to residential care amongst other changes around measures to address concerns about profiteering in children's social care with private providers having to disclose their finances.

8.1 The posts identified to be funded through the Families First Partnership Programme will be recruited as per RMBC recruitment processes to support the safeguarding partners and implantation of the programme.

8.2 Contracts will be issued in accordance with the funding available.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 The aim of the Families First Partnership Programme is to support safeguarding partners to implement Family Help and multi-agency child protection reforms and make greater use of Family Group Decision Making. Government expects to see improved support provided to children and their families. The programme aligns with the key local partnership priorities and plans including Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council Plan 2022/25, Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership plan and associated

strategies, Rotherham Health and Wellbeing Plan and Rotherham Health and Social Care Place Plan.

9.2 In delivering the expectations outlined in the Families First Partnership (FFP) programme guide, safeguarding partners will transform how support and protection are provided to families, focusing on early intervention and prevention to avoid crisis situations. This will emphasise the whole-family approach embedded in Rotherham practice, bringing together multi-disciplinary professionals to support families in overcoming challenges and remaining together.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 As this is a progress update, there are no equality implications, but equality and diversity will continue to be considered and monitored as part of the strategy.

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

11.1 As this is a progress update, there are no implications, but this will continue to be considered and monitored as part of the strategy.

12. Implications for Partners

12.1 These are referred to in the report.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 These are referred to in the report.

14. Accountable Officers

Helen Sweaton Joint Assistant Director Commissioning and Performance.

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	John Edwards	Click here to enter a date.
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	Click here to enter a date.
Assistant Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phillip Horsfield	Click here to enter a date.

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