

Consultation documents
Children's Services
Families First Partnership Reform

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. In March 2025 the Department for Education launched the Families First Partnership Programme Guidance mandating wholesale reform of the children's social care system.
- 1.2. Updated in March 2026 the national programme aims to deliver a *[r]ebalancing [of] the system of help, support and protection. The Families First Partnership (FFP) programme shifts focus towards intensive earlier help for families, more expert, focused multi-agency child protection practice and greater use of family networks.*
- 1.3. To achieve this the reform programme requires local authorities to:
 - Integrate targeted early help and child in need case management into a single Family Help service
 - Establish dedicated multi-agency child protection teams
- 1.4. The Families First programme runs in parallel to and is aligned with three other major national reform programmes being delivered locally. These are:
 - The Best Start in Life programme
 - The Local Area SEND Reform programme
 - The Integrated Neighbourhood Health programme
- 1.5. The programmes have significant interdependencies, shared expectations and drivers, which include:
 - Shifting resources from centralised models of delivery to integrated neighbourhood-based offers of help and support
 - Enhancing multi-agency and multi-disciplinary delivery to shift the focus of resources from crisis spend to preventative spend
 - Increasing the range of roles able to act as lead trusted professionals, holding the coordination of the support offer for families
- 1.6. Within the local authority children's social care services a pilot Family Help Service was launched in January 2026. This was intended to deliver a test and learn approach to full implementation of the new model. The pilot service operates in a single 'multi-ward area' of the borough – East Central.
- 1.7. Building on national guidance; learning from pathfinder authorities; local design groups; and the learning from the pilot team this document sets out the proposals for the full reorganisation of services to deliver the single Family Help service and build the internal capacity as the foundation for Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams.

2. Key issues for consideration

Current service delivery arrangements – in scope services

- 2.1 Current arrangements for local authority core delivery of targeted early help, child in need and child protection activity sits across five service areas:
- Family Early Help Service
 - Assessment and Intervention Service
 - Safeguarding and Family Support Service
 - Quality Assurance & Workforce Development Service – Child Protection Chairs
 - Youth Justice Service – Extra Familial Harm & Missing Team
- 2.2 The Family Early Help service provide and coordinate non-statutory whole family support and intervention for families meeting the existing Tier 2 threshold of children with additional needs requiring a multi-agency early help assessment with a lead professional coordinating an approach to provision of additional services. The service provides ongoing support and intervention to manage risk and ensure family sustainability and deescalation or escalation to statutory services where risk increases or persists.
- 2.3 The Assessment and Intervention service undertakes statutory assessments of children meeting the existing Tier 3 threshold and higher. This includes statutory child in need and child protection activity. The service completes relevant assessments and where necessary undertakes time limited interventions for children and families who do not need longer term intervention. The service also holds the wider edge of care function – Keeping Families Together.
- 2.4 The Safeguarding and Family Support service receives children and families following assessment, where longer term intervention is required. This includes longer term child in need interventions, child protection planning, and associated process for children in or entering care. The service also holds wider system functions including, oversight of care proceedings, parenting assessment and dedicated private fostering capacity.
- 2.5 The Child Protection Chairs service within the Quality Assurance & Workforce Development unit is responsible for the chairing of initial and review child protection conferences.
- 2.6 Ancillary to the core delivery services a number of linked functions provide or coordinate elements of prevention activity, targeted early help, child in need and child protection support and therefore fall within the wider scope of the reforms and reorganisation, these include:
- Youth Justice Services
 - Adolescent Support Services

- Education Inclusion Team
- Local Authority Designated Officer
- Schools Safeguarding Team
- Virtual School
- Community Family Help & Support
- SEND Inclusion Practitioners (SENDIPs)
- Early Years Early Help Team
- All Age Disabilities Services
- Schools Safeguarding Team

Case for change

Social care reform expectations & Working Together 2026

- 2.7 The Families First Partnership (FFP) Programme Guide sets out a vision and clearly defined expectations for reform of the targeted early help, child in need and multi-agency child protection system into a *seamless system of help, support and protection*.



- 2.8 The Family Help service definition is that it brings together targeted early help and child in need support and services into a seamless offer. While families may move between targeted early help and child in need within Family Help, this should feel seamless with minimal disruption – supported by greater consistency in lead practitioner, and the use of single assessments and plans, helping families retain relationships and trust in the system.
- 2.9 The programme guide and Working Together 2026 set the threshold criteria for Family Help as non-statutory and statutory support and services provided through:
- targeted early help (THE) under sections 10 and 11 of the Children Act 2004. This support is provided to children and families who are identified by practitioners to have multiple and/or complex needs, requiring a specialist and/or multi-disciplinary/agency response, where statutory support or intervention is not required
 - statutory support, including assessments, delivered under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 (children in need, including how this applies for disabled children)

- 2.10 Under the programme, safeguarding partners are required by March 2027 to bring together TEH and Child in Need support and services into a single offer of Family Help, with alternatively qualified family help practitioners and social workers working together across a broad continuum of need.
- 2.11 The new arrangements require the establishment of a new role of Family Help Lead Practitioner (FHLPs). FHLPs will:
- be a range of practitioners from different disciplines with the right knowledge and skills to support families who need help. Some will be social work qualified, and others will have alternative appropriate skills or qualifications;
 - be part of multi-disciplinary Family Help teams and may or may not be employed directly by the local authority. Decisions about who holds the role of lead practitioner should consider capacity and capability;
 - work with families with professional curiosity and empathy and be highly effective at offering help to the family;
 - be responsible for providing direct help and will coordinate support through the 'team around the family' and from other services;
 - remain the main point of contact for the family for as long as support is needed;
 - implement a whole family plan which responds to needs identified through the single assessment;
 - be able to identify where there are safeguarding concerns that do not reach the threshold of significant harm and work with the Team Around the Family and the Family Help team manager to plan for safety and improve the situation.
 - be alert to all forms of significant harm, both inside and outside the home and online. Where practitioners are concerned that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, FHLPs will engage multi-agency child protection teams (MACPTs) and Lead Child Protection Practitioners (LCPPs) for consultation.
- 2.12 Multi-agency child protection teams (MACPTs) will act as centres of excellence, guiding practice across agencies to support the timely identification of significant harm and maximising opportunities to protect children, advising and guiding the wider system on concerns about child protection. They will respond to child protection concerns about children of all ages and in all contexts, from unborn children to teenagers, and children in family homes to children in or leaving care.
- 2.13 As a minimum MACPTs are required to have:
- embedded Lead Child Protection Practitioner (LCPP) social workers
 - senior police
 - health and
 - education practitioners

- 2.14 The role of the MACPT is to make timely and informed and multi-agency judgements about whether the significant harm threshold is met. In addition, through a January 2026 policy statement and ongoing consultation on further revisions to Working Together guidance the government has set out its intended regulations for the role of MACPTs to include the following prescribed activities:
- convene strategy meetings
 - lead section 47 enquiries
 - convene child protection conferences and forums
 - oversee the development and delivery of child protection plans
 - keep child protection plans under review
 - provide case consultation for practitioners who need MACPT expertise
 - maintain an understanding of patterns of significant harm in the local area and agency responses.
- 2.15 The programme expectation is that families will stay rooted in Family Help, including when child protection action is necessary, with Family Help Lead Practitioners (FHLPs) continuing their relationship and responsibilities for direct practice and coordinating support and input for families across the system. The LCPP or MACPT will not become the lead practitioner(s) for the family at any point.
- 2.16 Family Help lead practitioners will play a crucial role in working with the MACPT to make sure that the daily life and experiences of the child and family are understood and inform child protection decision making. The FHLP should always be a social worker when it is agreed that a child needs a child protection plan, and/or there are concerns about actual or likely significant harm for a child not already known to Family Help. It will remain critical to have social workers with child protection expertise within Family Help to be the FHLP for children in need where needs are particularly complex, or for children on child protection plans.

Pathfinders

- 2.17 As a part of the national programme a number of 'pathfinder' authorities began moving to the new model of delivery prior to the full roll out across all local authority areas. Pathfinder learning and delivery approaches have been regularly shared through regional and national forums.
- 2.18 In addition to published documentation from pathfinder authorities, there has been regular discussions and engagement with regional peer pathfinders both directly and facilitated by the regional Department for Education link adviser. Learning from pathfinder authorities has informed these proposals and will continue during implementation

Design & Delivery Groups

- 2.19 Throughout 2025 – 26 a number of workshops and Design and Delivery groups have been held with a cross-section of children's services staff, to discuss and plan for the implementation of the Family Help and Multi-Agency Child Protection Services. These have been chaired by the Heads of Service for Assessment & Intervention and Family Early Help; and the Head of Service for Safeguarding and Family Support and Head of Quality Assurance & Workforce Development respectively. The workshops and groups reviewed guidance, pathfinder learning and current operating arrangements to explore and feedback views and ideas on the delivery of the Family First Reforms in Southwark.
- 2.20 Groups considered the approach to structuring Family Help services at a neighbourhood level. Feedback was broadly positive on this approach and highlighted the opportunity to align delivery with other programmes and services that are moving into neighbourhood models, including alignment to Family Hub delivery. There were questions raised about whether a neighbourhood model works for all age groups of children with the suggestion that this model had greater strengths for pre-adolescent children with alignment close to primary school delivery. It was felt by some staff that a neighbourhood model could be weaker in delivery for adolescents due to the lower correlation between secondary schools and neighbourhood of residence.
- 2.21 This led to discussion on the potential for distinct adolescent function. Groups expressed the potential for strengthening local arrangements through either distinct Adolescent Family Help teams working at a whole borough level, or an element of centralised Adolescent advice functions siting outside of case holding Family Help teams. Other ideas included a focused adolescent specialist in each Family Help Team. Questions were raised about how an adolescent only team would work where families had other younger children and if that meant a move away from a whole family approach.

Test & learn pilot

- 2.22 From January 2026 a pilot Family Help service has been operating in the East Central multi-ward area. The pilot service consists of three teams, each with six practitioners comprised of 3 social work qualified staff, and 3 alternatively qualified staff. The teams are managed by two social work qualified team managers and one alternatively qualified team manager.
- 2.23 Findings from the test and learn pilot teams included:
- positive feedback around teamwork, role generosity and the strength of alternatively qualified practitioners working alongside social work qualified colleagues.

- Day to day management, supervision and support from the clinical service was a positive and supported the teams to keep relational work at the centre of what they are trying to do.
- The pilot teams were able to create a positive identity as Family Help practitioners with a shared recognition of working effectively with families over the longer-term to create change.
- The alternatively qualified team manager role brought benefits through a different approach to practice and balancing community focused whole-family working with statutory social care leadership. However, there were significant difficulties in these arrangements with the manager not being able to sign off or appropriately oversee activity at a statutory level. This led to increased workload for the service manager and social work qualified team managers having to countersign and review statutory work.
- The pilot function found locality working to be a positive with a greater understanding of the local area and the connections to locality based services.
- The pilot teams found the ratio of one manager to six practitioners to work well, with no noticeable impact on capacity to supervise and oversee case work.
- Pilot staff highlighted strong and consistent individual and group supervision, with clinical input, as a real strength.
- The pilot team found that a single service manager to 4 teams would be an appropriate ratio based on the mixed workloads across teams.

Linkages to neighbourhoods

2.24 Transformation and reform in children's services is intrinsically linked to wider ongoing public sector reform activity noted in paragraph 5. National reform across the Best Start for Life, SEND and Neighbourhood health systems, alongside local reform to council delivery arrangements represent a singular opportunity to focus resource and delivery closer to our residents and communities and at the same time, strengthen multi-agency delivery and connections across services.

2.25 As a part of these programmes the council and partner services have agreed a shared geographical delivery model that group electoral wards into 5 multi-ward areas (MWA). These areas are:

- **North East** – Surrey Docks, Rotherhithe, North Bermondsey and South Bermondsey wards
- **North West** – Borough & Bankside, London Bridge & West Bermondsey, Chaucer and St George's wards
- **Central East** – Old Kent Road, Peckham, Nunhead & Queens Road, Rye Lane and Peckham Rye wards
- **Central West** – North Walworth, Faraday, Newington, Camberwell Green and St Giles wards

- **South** – Champion Hill, Goose Green, Dulwich Village, Dulwich Hill and Dulwich Wood wards.

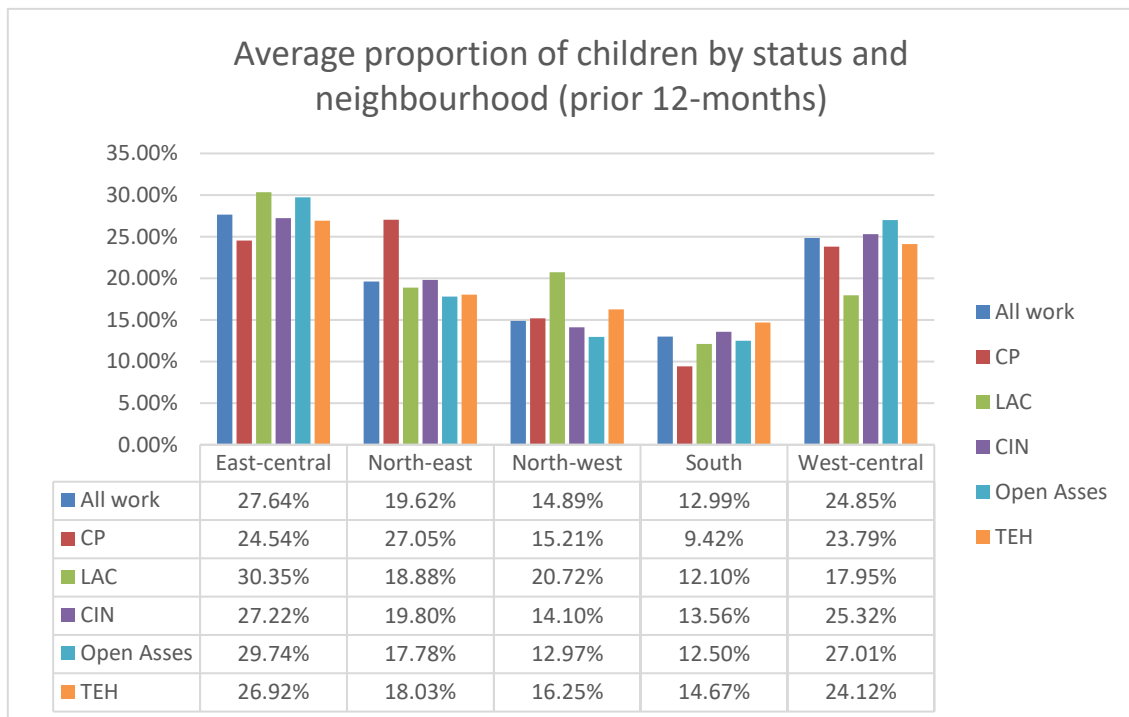
- 2.26 Family Help services will be linked to individual MWAs with Single Point of Contacts for each area at the Service Manager tier. Single points of contact will form part of core MWA leadership team alongside Best Start Family Hub Leads, and Neighbourhood Health Integrators.
- 2.27 MWA leadership teams will strengthen neighbourhood relationships with schools and other council, partnership and community services operating in the particular neighbourhood – such as Libraries, Leisure Centres, GPs, Faith Groups and voluntary organisations. This will support teams operating on a neighbourhood model to co-produce and strengthen the ongoing local area offer for children and families, build stronger relationships with key stakeholders, and increase knowledge and awareness of our communities, and the local area offer that will support family resilience and sustainability.
- 2.28 Family Help services will be based centrally at the Queens Road campus but will be expected to operate flexibly within their relevant MWA, for example spending time working from the local area Best Start Family Hub, meeting families in local community settings, such as libraries and youth centres, building connections with local services.

Modelling Approach

- 2.29 To propose the future structure of services, models have been worked up based on the demand within relevant services. Some key principles adopted in the modelling include:
- Recognition of the significant fluctuations in demand across the children's system with the maximum numbers of children actively held within our services over the last 12 months being 27% higher than the minimum point in the year. Building a model based on maximum capacity would greatly exceed available resources, and would include periods of time where capacity was heavily underutilised. A model based on minimum capacity would lead to periods of unmanageable demand on individual workers and teams. Therefore, average demand across the 12-month period has been used to model capacity.
 - Under a family help model case holding practitioners will have a mixed caseload across levels of need meaning there is an opportunity to move away from the model caseloads held by existing services. Leading to some workers having higher average caseloads with lower average risk/complexity than previously, and others having lower average caseloads with higher average levels of risk/complexity than previous.
 - There is significant variability in demand across the borough therefore, whilst team structure will maintain borough-wide fidelity, spans of control for middle and senior managers will be by necessity variable. This means

there is an opportunity to assign broader strategic duties where capacity allows.

- Where possible the model will seek to maximise equity in overall children managed within single teams.
- Whilst neighbourhood delivery will be maintained as far as this is viable, due to fluctuations in demand and ongoing demographic change in the borough there is the potential need for resource or demand to be redeployed within and across neighbourhoods once the new system is live - to ensure safe and equitable service delivery. Senior and operational leaders will constantly review capacity and demand and where necessary will enact line management amendments to ensure equity across the system is maintained as reasonably as possible.
- Due to the limitations on alternatively qualified staff holding statutory child protection case work, modelling has shown that the full service will require teams with a larger ratio of social work qualified staff in comparison to the test and learn pilot.
- MACPT support for continuing child protection processes equates to additional capacity in the system and supports broader spans of control for Family Help team managers and caseloads for child protection case holding practitioners.



Family Help

- 2.30 For the purposes of consultation two possible models of the Family Help Service are proposed for feedback from consultees, the final proposals will review feedback from staff and consider whether either of the models is to be the final proposal or if a hybrid, or entirely alternate arrangement, should be established:
- Model A – all age neighbourhood-based Family Help Services
 - Model B – all age neighbourhood-based Family Help Services with a centralised borough-wide adolescent function that is primarily focused on those adolescents at risk of harm outside the home or immediate entry into care.
- 2.31 Following changes to Working Together statutory guidance alongside findings from the test and learn pilot and pathfinder authority it would not be a judicious use of resources and would not therefore be viable for there to be alternatively qualified Team Managers within Family Help services. There are clear expectations from Statutory Guidance that Family Help Lead Practitioners should be overseen by *‘Social Work Qualified Practice Supervisors or Managers.’* Where alternatively qualified team management was tested in the pilot Family Help service, whilst the knowledge, skill set and experience of the alternatively qualified manager was recognised as a major strength, this also led to significant duplication of management duties and inefficient delivery and oversight of practice.
- 2.32 Modelling for each model has been undertaken by reviewing maximum, minimum and average workloads in the in-scope services across the previous year. This is to understand demand and build an equitable distribution of capacity across the borough.

Family Help – Model A

- 2.33 Under this proposal there would be neighbourhood-based services supporting all children and families within targeted early help, child in need and child protection processes. Teams would consist of:
- One social work qualified team manager
 - One social work qualified Senior FHLP
 - One alternatively qualified Senior FHLP
 - Three social work qualified FHLPs
 - One alternatively qualified FHLP
- 2.34 Based on profiled capacity and available resource across our system the teams would be organised under two Heads of Service reporting directly to the Deputy Director for Children’s Social Care, with the underlying service teams as set out below:

- Head of Service for East Southwark & Care Proceedings Lead – 12 teams overall across the East Central and North East neighbourhoods:
 - Service Manager East Central Teams 1-3 & Parenting Assessment Team (4 teams)
 - Service Manager East Central Teams 4-6 & Private Fostering Social Worker (4 teams)
 - Service Manager North East Teams 1-4 (4 teams)
 - Care Proceedings Case Manager
- Head of Service for West & South Southwark – 12 teams overall across the West Central, North West and South neighbourhoods:
 - Service Manager North West teams 1-3 and West Central Team 1 (4 teams)
 - Service Manager West Central Teams 2-5 (4 teams)
 - Service Manager South Teams 1-3 & Keeping Families Together (4 teams)

2.35 Under Model A the following posts would be deleted:

- Assistant Director – Family Early Help & Youth Justice – 1 FTE
- Child Protection Coordinators - 6 FTE
- Early Help Practitioner – 28 FTE
- Experienced Practitioner (EFH) – 2 FTE
- Family Support Officer (SFS) – 1 FTE
- Family Support Worker (A&I) – 2 FTE
- Family Support Worker (SFS) - 3 FTE
- Family Support Worker (EFH & Missing) – 2 FTE
- Senior Early Help Practitioner - 8 FTE
- Senior Social Worker – 27 FTE
- Service Manager (FEH) – 2 FTE
- Service Manager (A&I) - 2 FTE
- Service Manager (SFS) - 4 FTE
- Service Manager (Child Protection Chairs) - 1 FTE
- Social Worker (A&I & SFS) – 64 FTE
- Team Manager (A&I & SFS) – 19 FTE
- Team Manager (EFH & Missing) – 1 FTE
- Team Manager (FEH) - 8 FTE
- Head of Service (FEH) - 1 FTE
- Head of Service (A&I) - 1 FTE
- Head of Service (SFS) – 1 FTE

2.36 Under Model A the following wider implications would include:

- Line management of the Head of Youth Justice will be amended to report directly to the Director of Children's Services

- The Parenting Assessment Team remains unchanged
- The single role of Private Fostering Social Worker is retained as a unique position.
- The Keeping Families Together edge of care team remains unchanged.
- Future consideration will be given as to the re-distribution of clinical capacity to ensure alignment with the new model.

2.37 Under Model A the following posts would be created (provisional grade):

- Head of Service – East Southwark (15)
- Head of Service – West & South Southwark (15)
- Service Manager Family Help – 6 FTE (14)
- Social Work Qualified Family Help Team Manager – 21 FTE (12)
- Alternatively Qualified Senior Family Help Lead Practitioner – 21 FTE (11)
- Social Work Qualified Senior Family Help Lead Practitioner – 21 FTE (11)
- Alternatively Qualified Family Help Lead Practitioner – 21 FTE (10)
- Social Work Qualified Family Help Lead Practitioner – 63 FTE (10)

2.38 Full detail on the structure and model under model A are included at Appendix A, including structure charts and modelled caseloads for neighbourhood teams against average, minimum and maximum demand profiled over the previous 12-months.

Family Help – Model B

2.39 Through the discussions with Pathfinder authorities and the internal design and delivery groups, a consistent theme raised has been the opportunity through the reform programme to consider establishing a stronger response for adolescents, in particular those at risk of harm outside the home (ROTH) and those at risk of entry into care.

2.40 Staff workshops held to review the model looked at four designs:

- No specialised adolescent service
- A central specialist non-case holding adolescent advice and support service
- A central specialist adolescent case holding service
- Specialist adolescent practitioners established within each Family Help team.

2.41 Overall discussions from the design and delivery workshops and profiling of best use of resources suggests a centralised adolescent function that is case holding is the most viable model.

- 2.42 Under this proposal there would be a greater integration of current capacity within youth justice services into the overall Family Help model, through the creation of integrated and standalone borough-wide case-holding Vulnerable Adolescent Services. Individual Family Help teams would remain structured as with Model A.
- 2.43 This model recognises the significant quality of preventative work undertaken within the Youth Justice service and seeks to better integrate delivery into a more cohesive overall help and support structure. This model also recognises the level of overlap in delivery between the usual social care service and the youth justice service, with on average one third of children worked with in youth justice non-statutory space being co-allocated to the Family Early Help or Child in Need services. This supports meeting the test and expectation of the Families First programme of moving to single lead practitioners and single assessment and plans for children and families.
- 2.44 In addition to those teams and roles proposed for re-configuration under Model A, this model would reduce the YJS teams by two and increase overall Family Help system capacity through the adolescent Family Help teams. The remaining 5 Youth Justice Service teams would be consolidated under a single service manager for Youth Justice.
- 2.45 Based on profiled capacity and available resource across our system the teams would be organised under two Heads of Service reporting directly to the Deputy Director for Children's Social Care, with the underlying service teams as set out below:
- Head of Service for Family Help – 16 teams overall across the borough:
 - Service Manager East Central Teams 1-4 (4 teams)
 - Service Manager West Central Teams 1-4 (4 teams)
 - Service Manager North West teams 1-3 and South Team 1 (4 teams)
 - Service Manager North East Teams 1-3 and South Team 2 (4 teams)
 - Head of Service for Vulnerable Adolescents & Statutory Youth Justice Service – 13 teams overall operating at a borough wide level:
 - Service Manager Vulnerable Adolescents teams 1-3 & Keeping Families Together (4 teams)
 - Service Manager Vulnerable Adolescents teams 4-6 & Parenting Assessment Team (4 teams)
 - Service Manager – Youth Justice teams – 1-5 (5 teams)
- 2.46 Under Model B the following posts would be deleted in addition to those listed in Model A:
- Service Manager (YJS) – 1 FTE
 - YJS Officer – 6 FTE

- Team Manager (YJS) – 2 FTE
- Head of Service (YJS) – 1 FTE

2.47 Under Model B the following wider implications would include:

- The Parenting Assessment Team remains unchanged
- The single role of Private Fostering Social Worker is retained as a unique position.
- The Keeping Families Together edge of care team remains unchanged.
- Future consideration will be given as to the re-distribution of clinical capacity to ensure alignment with the new model.

2.48 Under Model B the following posts would be created (provisional grade):

- Head of Service – Family Help (15)
- Head of Service – Vulnerable Adolescents & Youth Justice (15)
- Service Manager Family Help – 4 FTE (14)
- Service Manager Vulnerable Adolescents – 2 FTE (14)
- Social Work Qualified Family Help Team Manager – 22 FTE (12)
- Alternatively Qualified Senior Family Help Lead Practitioner – 22 FTE (11)
- Social Work Qualified Senior Family Help Lead Practitioner – 22 FTE (11)
- Alternatively Qualified Family Help Lead Practitioner – 22 FTE (10)
- Social Work Qualified Family Help Lead Practitioner – 66 FTE (10)

2.49 Full detail on the structure and model under Model B are included at Appendix B, including modelled caseloads for neighbourhood teams and the centralised adolescent function against average, minimum and maximum demand profiled over the previous 12-months.

MACP Teams

2.50 The proposal for the multi-agency child protection teams (MACPT) is to align existing multi-agency functions under single-leadership to maximise partnership capacity for intelligence and information sharing, threshold decision making and child protection intervention.

2.51 This proposal would integrate the existing front door function, with the MACPTs and Extra-Familial Harm & Missing functions into a single service area, and under a single Head of Service. With the underlying service teams as set out below:

- Service Manager – One Front Door
- Service Manager – Multi-Agency Child Protection
- Out of Hours Team Manager

- 2.52 The MACPT will lead all child protection decision making, drawing on the FHLP's experience and knowledge of the family, whilst the FHLP retains the lead relationship with and responsibility for supporting the child and family.
- 2.53 The Head of Service for will hold the strategic responsibility for coordination of multi-agency action in response to child exploitation and risk outside the home.
- 2.54 Discussion through design and delivery groups and review of pathfinder learning has been considered to inform the potential for an adolescent focused MACPT. The review and discussions have concluded that this is not necessary, as the integration of multi-agency expertise and the existing ROTH functions mitigates the potential for dedicated adolescent MACPTs. Therefore, the MACPT service will be the same under both proposed Family Help models.
- 2.55 The London Innovation and Improvement Alliance has provided authorities with a tool to profile the number of Lead Child Protection Practitioners (LCPPs) required to manage the average levels of end-to-end child protection activity delivered by LCPPs. The tool suggests Southwark will require 10.9 FTE LCPPs. It is proposed that 15 FTE posts overall are established to ensure capacity and equity of management, with one senior post leading on ROTH and Missing from Home/Care, support by two officers.
- 2.56 In addition to the LCPP roles the new statutory arrangements mandate the incorporate of a professional with education experience to be a member of MACPTs. The requirement is for an individual with:
- past and direct experience working in a school setting (although not necessarily as a teacher)
 - skilled and experienced in school safeguarding at a senior level
 - understand the wider multi-agency safeguarding landscape
- 2.57 It is proposed that the MACPT service is designed as follows:
- Service Manager MACPT
 - Senior Lead Child Protection Practitioners – 6 FTE (12)
 - Lead Child Protection Practitioner – 6 FTE (11)
 - Senior Lead Child Protection Practitioner – Risk Outside the Home Lead (ROTH) Lead – 1 FTE (12) – will carry reduced CP caseload and adopt systems leadership for missing, exploitation, extra-familial harm and risk outside the home (ROTH) response for both children in need of help and protection and children in care.
 - 2 Lead Child Protection Practitioners (G11)
 - Extra-Familial Harm Outreach & Return Home Interview Coordinators

- Education Safeguarding Officer – 2 FTE (11)

2.58 It is recognised that the Child Protection system requires some degree of independent oversight, not least at a time of significant change in ways of working. It is proposed that a dedicated transition post is created to provide independent oversight of the quality of child protection decision making, planning and review. The role will be created for a 2-year period and reviewed in early 2029 with a view to discontinuation or permanent establishment as necessary. The role will be an additional Audit & Learning Lead dedicated to Child Protection oversight reporting to the Audit & Learning Service Manager.

Rapid Response function

2.59 It has been widely recognised through Pathfinder authorities, and local design and delivery group discussions that there is a need to retain an element of 'outside of case work' preventative capacity to support reductions in the throughput of families to Family Help and MACPT services, where a time limited piece of assertive outreach and intervention can potentially prevent escalation to longer term allocations.

2.60 Through the recent restructure of the One Front Door a fixed term Rapid Response Team has been proposed within the One Front Door Service.

2.61 The Families First Partnership Grant is a time limited grant provided to local authorities to support the managed transition to the reformed ways of working, and to support investment in preventative activity to reduce demand during that transition. The current grant is scheduled to run until 2029.

2.62 It is recognised that the current alternatively qualified workforce within our services, including at Team Manager level, bring a wealth of knowledge, experience and capacity to our overall system that should be protected as far as resources allow. Under the Family Help re-organisation it is proposed that a Rapid Response function is scaled up as far as the remaining available resources under Models A & B allow, and that the Team Manager and Officer posts are reserved to alternatively qualified staff.

2.63 Whilst all Family Help Services will be aligned and/or work alongside Best Start Family Hubs the Rapid Response function will provide additional capacity to respond at pace and wrap support around Hubs and children and families; and help connect them to the offer of sustainability services in the community. The Rapid Response function will work as a primary connector of incoming referrals at the One Front Door to Best Start Family Hubs, helping families to rapidly navigate access to universal and community services through an immediate and assertive outreach offer.

- 2.64 Over the last few years Children's Services have been testing a dedicated Adolescent Sure Start function through use of reserve funding. The team has worked to provide a community-based support offer for adolescents. The team has undertaken time limited assessment and intervention for adolescents who do not meet the threshold for the full early help and social care services. In addition, the team have tested additional help and support capacity through drop-in sessions and outreach, as well as delivering community building capacity through developmental sessions with community groups and partner organisations.
- 2.65 The expansion of a Rapid Response function presents the opportunity to take the learning from the Adolescent Sure Start pilot, increase overall capacity and provide a simplified and single pathway and structure to the range of 'out of casework' support offered locally.
- 2.66 Under these proposals the Adolescent Sure Start offer will be transitioned into the new Rapid Response Service with expanded capacity and more consistency between the One Front Door and Best Start Family Hubs on a day-to-day basis. Offering:
- Capacity to multi-agency drop-in clinics
 - Joint visits with Best Start Family Hub staff
 - Coordinated action with VCS organisations to deliver neighbourhood based events and support offers
 - Supporting prevention system development through joint development activity with community and partner groups
- 2.67 It is therefore proposed that for a time limited period to March 2029 there is an increase from the one previously proposed Rapid Response Team to 3 Rapid Response Teams reporting directly to the Head of Service – Front Door, Multi-Agency Child Protection and ROTH. The full Rapid Response Service would include (provisional grades):
- Rapid Response Service Manager – 1 FTE (14)
 - Rapid Response Team Manager (AQ) – 3 FTE (12)
 - Rapid Response Senior Officers (AQ) – 3 FTE (11)
 - Rapid Response Officers (AQ) – 6 FTE (10)
- 2.68 The function will be reviewed in early 2029 to assess viability for continued investment where successful prevention activity has decreased later stage system cost.
- 2.69 With the transition of the Adolescent Sure Start offer into the larger Rapid Response function it is further proposed that linked pathways into the existing help and support offer for children and families are aligned under single leadership with the Parenting Team and Reducing Parental Conflict Lead to be moved under the Service Manager – Rapid Response.

2.70 Based on the above it is further proposed that the following posts are deleted:

- Service Manager – Community Family Help and Support – 1 FTE (14)
- Community Family Help and Support Team Manager – 1 FTE (12)
- Community Family Help and Support Officer – 1 FTE (8)

Working hours – early engagement

2.71 In discussions within Design and Delivery Groups and with partners agencies, a regular feedback theme has been the availability of capacity to address and respond to need flexibly and at times where families are more likely to need a crisis response.

2.72 This has primarily focused on how different working arrangements could have a greater impact on vulnerable adolescents and those at risk of immediate entry into care, who would benefit from a rapid wraparound response.

2.73 There are a number of potential alternative working patterns that could support a stronger response for our residents, these could include:

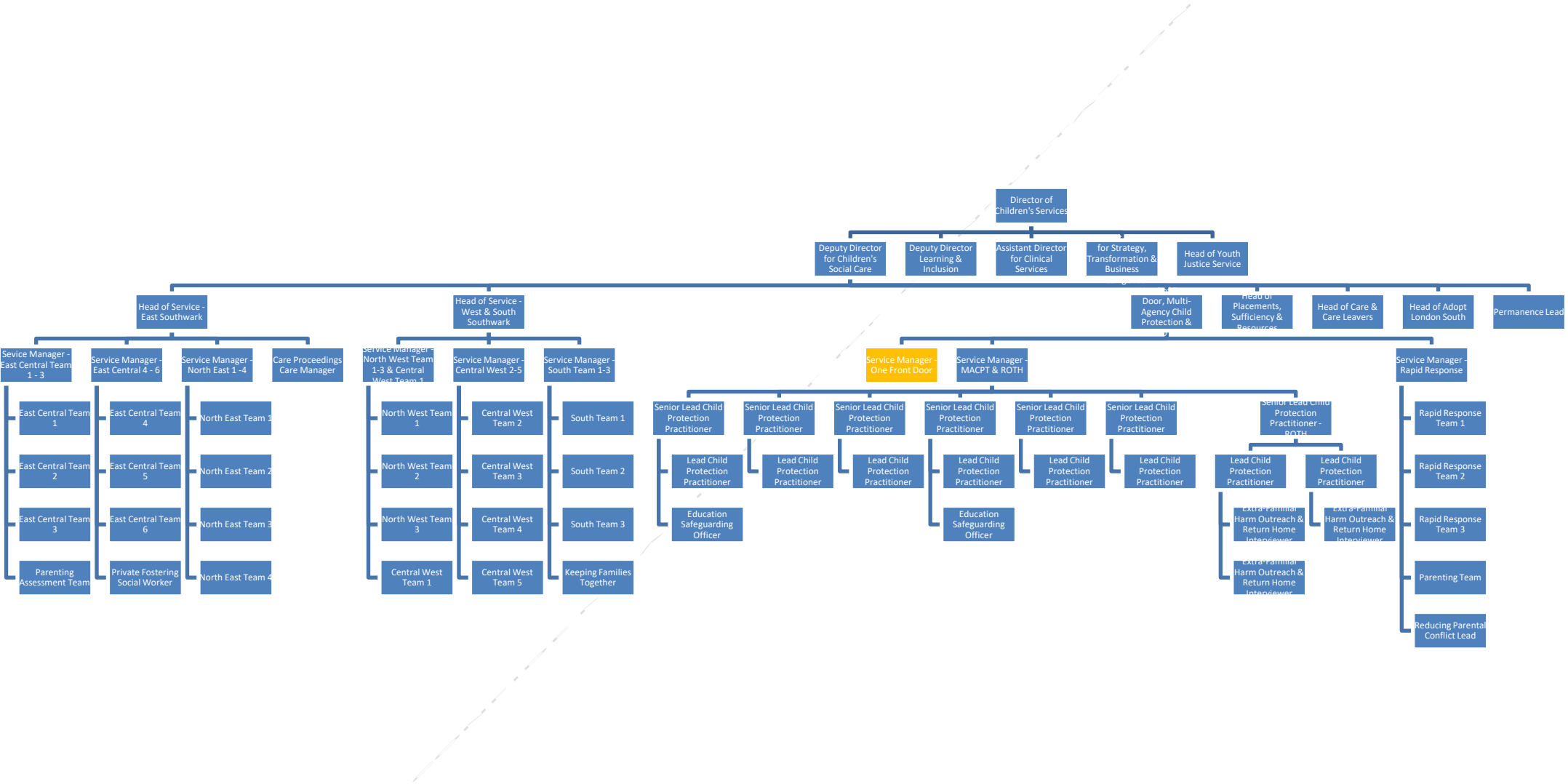
- Shift patterns covering a full 24 hour 7 day working arrangement.
- Shift patterns covering increased evening and weekend working, i.e. 8am to 11:59pm weekdays and midday to midnight on weekends.
- Shift patterns to extend working hours on particular days, i.e. Friday & Saturday.

2.74 There are also a number of ways in which this could be enacted, drawing on examples from partner agencies where similar arrangements exist. This could include:

- Making more non-standard work patterns available to relevant Family Help, Rapid Response and MACPT staff
- Extension of an offer on a voluntary basis to relevant staff to mobilise a consistent group working non-standard hours.
- Expansion of the existing Out of Hours bank staff arrangements to mobilise a larger group of available staff for a non-standard hours response. With expressions of interest sought from any staff able and willing to support this functionality.
- A contractual change for all relevant Family Help, Rapid Response and MACPT staff to include non-standard work patterns.
- A focused contractual change for key groups of staff, such as those working with the most at-risk adolescents or Rapid Response staff to include non-standard work patterns.

- 2.75 In parallel to the consultation on restructuring of services we are seeking early engagement with staff on how we could offer other working arrangements to provide a more robust and appropriate service to our children and families that addresses need arising outside of standard working hours.

Appendix A – Neighbourhood Based Capacity Modelling – Model A



Appendix A – Neighbourhood Based Capacity Modelling – Model B

