



Families First for Children Information Guide

A guide for parents to build respectful, honest and trusting relationships, with practical help that provides the foundations for long-term change.



Walsall Council



**Walsall
Families First
for Children**

Supporting families to live happier lives

What is Families First for Children and Family Help?

We all need some extra help and support at times, as a family we want you to know it's ok to ask for and expect help.

We have a document known as 'Our Family', this is a needs assessment, and it follows legal guidance.

The purpose of 'Our Family' is to help us all to understand your family, what is and has been happening, and what help you need so everyone in the family is safe and has an opportunity to thrive.

It helps us understand together your family story, so you can receive purposeful help.

The professional who does this assessment with you may vary depending on what help and support your family needs.

If extra support needs are identified, this can be a quick assessment. The assessment may be completed by the child's school or education provider, or a health professional, who will focus on these specific needs.

If you need more targeted help and support then a Family Help Practitioner will do the assessment with you, they will be known as the Family Help Coordinator. This may include consideration of your children meeting the legal definition of a 'child in need', or 'child in need of protection'.

If this is the case, this will be discussed with you and these terms will be properly explained.

'Our Family'

The purpose of this document is for this information to be in one place. We will return to this document with you if things change so we are not starting again. With your agreement this can be shared with other professionals, so you do not have to repeat this information to different people.

How we work together

Following the completion of 'Our Family' assessment of need, we will together agree a plan of support and meet regularly with all people and services identified as being important to your family to ensure help and support is being provided, this group of people are known as the 'team around the family'

Team Around the Family

This brings together your family and other people who are the right people to provide help and support, the other people could include school's or Early Years staff, Health Visitors, School Nurses, Midwifery, Doctors, Family Help Practitioners, Social Workers or the Voluntary and Community sector.

It is also important to recognise the support you could receive from your wider family and friends; help us to understand who they are and with your consent they can be part of the team around your family and be involved as soon as possible.

What you can expect from us

You can expect to:

- be treated with respect by all professionals, and things explained clearly
- have open and honest conversations about what is working well and what needs to change in your situation
- be at the centre of the plan, and feel included, any arrangements won't be made to you, they will be done with you
- be involved in setting goals, reviewing progress, and deciding what works best for you and your family
- things to be done, when it said they will be done
- be an equal partner, not to be told what to do and not to be judged

Our aim is to find solutions together that suit your needs and builds on your family's strengths.

What we need from you

For family help to make a positive impact, we need you to be willing to work with professionals and your wider family and friends who are supporting you. We need you to be open and honest with us about what is going well and what is challenging in your situation, so we can make sure the right help is being provided.

We need you to

- be active in the planning and reviewing of the support that you receive, and to give us feedback
- be able to work not just with you, but where possible with your networks and key people around you, this will be done with your agreement
- follow through with the things that you have agreed to, and to let us know if there are any changes or difficulties.




Family Help Co-ordinator

I will be your Family Help Co-ordinator, I will be your family's main point of contact and part of my responsibility will be to work with your family to complete the 'Our Family' assessment of need with you. I agree to support you and your family and ensure you get the right family help.

This means:

- I will be the constant support to you all
- I will help you to record what is working well and what could be better
- I will, with your consent, liaise with family members, your support networks, agencies and other professionals involved in your life, when it is right to do so
- I will explain the process of Family Help, your right's, including the right to be supported and involved

You can reach out to me at any time

	My name is: _____
	You can contact me during normal office hours on _____
	My e-mail: _____
	My telephone: _____
My office telephone: _____	
If you need to speak to anyone in an emergency out of office hours, please call the Emergency Duty Team on 0300 5552922	

For general information, helpful advice and support, along with information about what is available locally for you and your children, please follow the QR codes below, or ask me for further advice and I can sign post you.

Walsall Family Hubs

Your local Family Hub, where you can get information, help and support, as well as find out about local activities for you and your children to attend:



Parenting Support

Advice for parents, carers and grandparents from Walsall Council.



How we will work together



Your family has asked for or has agreed to have Family Help Support.

A Family Help Practitioner will contact you, possibly arrange a home visit where you can talk about the help and support your family would like.

We will agree who should be the Family Help Coordinator and the Our Family, assessment of need will be completed together, this should be completed within 35 working days.

As part of the Our Family you will be asked which family members, friends and services should be part of the 'team around the family' support.

Together the 'team around the family' will agree a Family Help Support Plan, this will be reviewed with you at least every 6 weeks to make sure you are happy with the support and, as a family add anything else you want to the plan.

We will continue to provide Family Help support until we all feel this is no longer needed. We will make sure things are improving for your family, if things are not getting better we will try to understand why and look at different ways to support you.

What is consent for Family Help?

Consent to receive Family Help means giving your permission to work with the Family Help Co-ordinator and the wider partnership to complete the 'Our Family' assessment of need, to receive support and/or sharing personal information. Respecting your rights as a family is important and so is ensuring that you receive the right support, and this support is in your family's best interest.

We understand that this might make you feel anxious or hesitant to work with us, so it is important that your Family Co-ordinator discusses any worries you may have as a family and ensure they explain the benefits of us working together and how Family Help can support your unique situation.

Consent involves informing you as a family what will happen, why it's necessary, and what the possible outcomes might be, this involves gathering information from your family, your support network, relevant agencies and professionals to get a complete understanding of your family's situation, this is done by us completing together 'Our Family' assessment of need and by us completing this together you are giving consent to receive Family Help.

It is important to note down as part of 'Our Family' anyone you do not want involved and why.

When we may override consent

There are certain situations where it might be necessary to override consent, usually involving the safety and well-being of a child/children. The main reason for overriding consent is if there is a significant risk of harm to a child, such as physical, emotional, or sexual abuse. Under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989, local authorities have a duty to investigate if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. Protecting the child takes precedence over the need for consent in these situations, however this action should only be taken if it is believed that gaining consent would put the child at further risk of harm.

Documentation

It's important to accurately record all discussions, decisions, and actions that we agree, including consent to work together. You will be provided with copies of the appropriate discussions, the 'Our Family' assessment and other notes which are relevant and/or helpful to you and your family.

How will your information be shared?

Walsall Safeguarding Partnership and Walsall Council complies with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which is a legal framework that sets guidelines for the collection and processing of personal information.

We will use your family's personal information so that we can provide advice and guidance, support services and safeguarding for your children and for you as a family as well as to provide the help and support you need as early as possible.



For further information please visit walsallsp.co.uk/

Family Help Agreement Form

I/We understand 'Family Help', we have been provided with an information booklet and consent to the 'Our Family' assessment of need and Family Help Plan to be completed together.

I/We consent for family and friends and other services being part of the Team Around the Family support and for relevant information to be shared to ensure the right support is provided.

I/We understand that the information is held securely on a 'case management system' in line with the relevant data protection legislation.

Family Name _____

Family Address _____

Main family contact number : _____

Main family email address: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

