



## 18 MONTHS OF HUBS

As the initial grant funding for the Family Hubs has now come to an end, we remain committed to building on the progress we have made so far. Our primary focus remains on strengthening partnerships to ensure continued access to high-quality services for all our communities across Leicestershire.

The recent Government budget announcement has recognised the essential importance of Family Hubs to their ambition to give all children the best start in life. As part of an £8 billion increase in spending on early years and family services we are yet to hear what this means for us in Leicestershire.



### From April 2023 to March 2024

- ISC's worked with over 3000 families
- Activity at our 'front door' – Emergency Responders supported approximately 535 families
- Universal Stay & Plays – staffed by trained volunteers. Stay & Play visitors (parents & children) 13,663
- 0-2 Pathway – supported 538 families
- SEND workers – supporting over 600 children with varying needs
- Community Fridges are run by volunteers and are our approach to support food poverty and reduce food waste.

**FOOD DONATED - 70,796KG, COMMUNITY FRIDGE VISITORS 16,766**

## MENTAL HEALTH PILOT PROJECT - CHARNWOOD

**In early 2023, the Charnwood Children and Family Wellbeing Service (now Family Help) successfully applied for funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to run a pilot project with Adult Social Care.**

The funding is through the National Supporting Families program which seeks to improve outcomes for families with more complex needs. Supporting Families is built on the principle of whole family working and whole family assessment.

The project aims to develop connections between Family Help and Adult Mental Health Teams so that we can:

- Produce a clear pathway for children and adults needing help and support
- Ensure that practitioners and managers across both services have a good understanding of the support available and how to access it
- reach a deeper understanding across both services about the opportunities to provide
- earlier help and the implications of this for our practice, systems, and processes.

**Since January, a steering group consisting of children's and adult services representatives has been meeting as a whole group and as subgroups, with an independent agency, Associate Solutions, leads the group.**

The purpose of this group is to develop a shared vision for this project:

- to help shape the direction and activities of this project
- to develop a Theory of Change to map the change journey
- to address and reduce barriers to effective joint working
- to provide support, direction, and advice to project staff
- to share the information and learning with teams
- contribute to the evaluation and monitoring of the project at the end of the year.

The focus of the first quarter of the pilot has been to get to know the individual teams and sharing and gathering information. Excellent links have been made between the Adult Mental Health Team, community mental Health Groups and Family Help, and we are already seeing an increase in referrals from the Mental Health Team to Family Help.

There have been joint visits and collaborative working between the teams, which will ensure no unmet needs within the families, which, in turn, will help improve the outcomes. We've been able to link workers together, which has helped access those hard-to-reach families and individuals. This has prevented several families being closed due to non-engagement.

The evaluation of a questionnaire shared with children's and adult workers in November 2023 provided valuable insights into the impact of the pilot. We will continue to send questionnaires to track our progress and identify areas for further improvement.

Moving forward, there's still a lot of work to be done. We're exploring joint training opportunities and ways to link the two different systems to make collaboration between the adult and children's teams even more seamless. We have arranged two workshops for managers and practitioners from both services to meet face to face to help move the project forward.

Two of our standout successes so far are the increased awareness of the services offered by each team and a better understanding of the referral and assessment processes. This newfound knowledge will guide us towards more focused and effective referrals, ensuring that families receive the support they need, when they need it.

## FEEDBACK FROM SERVICES

*"I've found it beneficial having a link between Adult Social Care and Children's Service. It's a really positive experience as a reablement worker as you've supported me to find out more information regarding what support is on offer to families, thus building my knowledge around this area. You've helped me find out what support is already being provided to families, how individuals are engaging, what barriers may arise and providing professional involvement contact details for Children's Service/ASC to work collaboratively to support parents & children."*

*"I feel the presence you have within the team is valued on so many levels and it is a comfort to know that we can discuss cases with you that have children involved, I find your participation in GSM meetings helpful when we are looking for feedback from the team regarding cases and how we can progress forward."*

*"You have a quick response time when questions are put to you and this reduces the amount of time trying to find information from other sources, this help with time management in processing information. I feel that a link between the two services provides more stability for families and allows professionals to work together when appropriate to provide the best support for all involved instead of separately."*

*"The role I'm in is proving to be so valuable. It's not just about bridging the gap between services; it's about fostering a culture of understanding, empathy, and collaboration. With increased understanding of each other's services and a commitment to child-focused approaches, we're making strides in identifying concerns for children in a timely manner."*

*"Together, both children's and adult services can continue to innovate, collaborate, and make a lasting difference in the lives of the families we serve."*



## RPC CONTINUES SUCCESS JOURNEY



Frequent, intense and poorly resolved conflict between parents and co-parents can place children at risk of mental health issues, and behavioural, social and academic problems. It can also have a significant effect on a child's long-term outcomes.

In Leicestershire we have commissioned a Parental Conflict Practitioner Toolkit and provide FREE 2.5-hour training to support its use. Following the training participants will receive the Parental Conflict Toolkit along with links to videos and other resources to support conversations with parents.

The training sessions are multi-agency and since March 2022 we have delivered this training to nearly 650 workers in Leicestershire from across all sectors.

We know from feedback that the training and Toolkit gives workers the confidence and tools to talk to parents and co-parents. If you have any questions or require any further information, please contact [julie.crookes@leics.gov.uk](mailto:julie.crookes@leics.gov.uk)

## EXPRESSION OF FREEDOM

Our Family Help Service organised an exhibition in Leicester's Highcross to raise awareness of domestic abuse from 25th November - 10th December, coinciding with the '16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence', an international awareness event. The display featured powerful pieces created by survivors and young people from across the county.

'Expression of Freedom' was organised with support from Living Without Abuse (LWA) and artists to help survivors of domestic abuse reflect, heal and be empowered.

An emotive and thought-provoking exhibition attracted hundreds of visitors, peaking on Thursday 28th November with over 100 people attending.

You can find more information on [domestic abuse support services](#) | [Leicestershire County Council](#) offered for the region.





## GATE FOCUS GROUP MEETING

Earlier in the Summer, we held a focus group at the GATE offices, where community members had the opportunity to share their lived experiences.

They provided numerous examples of the ongoing inequalities they face in accessing services and support. Simple, day-to-day services that many of us can use without challenges often present significant barriers for members of their community. For instance, obtaining book loans for children can be difficult due to travelling and returning books on time or to the correct library. The group reported being frequently denied access to public toilets without any explanation.

Accessing healthcare is also a struggle, as many community members do not permanently reside in the same area, and their needs may not align with how services are delivered. The focus group expressed a willingness to engage in conversations addressing these inequalities. Key messages from the discussions were shared with the lead officers for follow-up.

The family hubs team continues to work closely with GATE. Our most recent online information session with GATE was a success, with all 100 tickets sold out! A face-to-face session also took place in late September, focusing on understanding life in the Gypsy and Roma Traveller community and how we, as professionals, can best support Gypsy and Traveller families. We continue to work with GATE and will update our progress in the next newsletter.

## NEW MATERNITY INFORMATION

We're excited to share that over the last year we have been working closely with a range of local professionals, local community members and Heads Up to create informative maternity cards designed specifically for expectant parents from Asian and Black heritage. These cards provide crucial information about the maternity services available to support their journey into parenthood and why accessing midwifery support as early as possible is crucial.

We have begun to share these cards in key locations and are sharing them across local community groups and with individuals who are trusted people across central Loughborough. The aim of the project is to get people talking about the importance of antenatal appointments and reduce any worries.

# SUPPORTING ALL PARENTS - TRIPLE P

**Triple P is a parenting programme that provides families with a range of strategies to allow parents to work with resources that work for them. The aim is to improve parental confidence in setting rules and boundaries while also raising resilient children. We interviewed a parent (mother, age 36) who had taken part in the programme.**

## **What ethnic group do you identify with?**

I am a Gypsy Traveller. There is stigma attached to being a Gypsy traveller. Gypsy Travellers can be judged from the moment they speak, and people hear their accent. We can be denied access to things in the community such as using public toilets, that there is a lack of trust, and that people have this negative view of our community

## **Which course did you complete?**

Triple P Stepping Stones (a specific part of Triple P for parents who have children with SEND)

## **Who were you referred by and how did you initially feel about the referral?**

Social care as part of the plan put in place by the court. I felt worthless and really rubbish about myself. I felt bad thinking what's gone wrong, what's happened to my life. I felt worried about going into a group, how does this work? what am I going to say? what do I have to do? I thought I would be judged if they found out who I was and that I wouldn't be treated the same. I thought this is complete rubbish - I have a 19-year-old, and I have 8 children.

## **How did you feel once the initial contact took place?**

I'm not good with phones so I asked my support worker from Leicestershire Gate to help me. I received the text messages from the triple p worker and voicemail. Having a phone call helped me to understand the group and what it was about. Being able to do it from the office online really helped and made me feel comfortable.

## **How did you feel after the first session?**

I felt good about myself and more confident. I felt relaxed because everyone was talking so it made me feel fine.

## **Was there anything that contributed to you feeling that way?**

It made me feel really good when other parents and you (the teachers) were saying what I shared was a good idea. I never left a session feeling sad, I felt good, and I still get my book out to look at it. You explained everything as we went along, you played the videos but then you explained it in a way that I could understand as well as having the book to look at. You do it in small chunks and that really helps me, I can't take too much in, in one go.

**If someone else from your community needed support, how would you explain the group and encourage them to get support?**

I think people in my community should accept the help, but I know it's hard for them. You learn every day. On the parenting courses, its up-to-date information on how you rear your kids because in our culture you get reared up how your parents got reared up and how they got reared up. I would tell them I've been on the course and tell them it's not as bad as you think. I would tell them about my changes in such a short space of time. It's those little changes that change your life.

**What do you think are the biggest changes for you?**

I don't swear anymore, I've learnt all about behaviour communication [looking at behaviour as a form of communication]. I've learnt how to manage my children a lot better.

I have learnt about my children's emotions and where to step in to help them. I use praise and sticker charts for my children and that really works. Even my oldest children want stickers and for me to say well done. It makes me feel good that people are proud of me. It's given me a lot more confidence and hope for my future and the children. I use all this for my children in the contact centre to try and get my children back. I just need to keep going. I've come along way in a short time. My daughter now calls me Nanny McPhee – She said, "Mum's changed, and I don't know where she's got all this information from".

I now share it with my daughter who has children to help her. I was in a bad place before and I just let my children take over me, I would let them do what they want. But I can see the change now just using different words with them and they know what to expect from me now. I can see them changing and they can see me changing and that makes me happier and makes me feel more confident to get them where I want them to be.

**SINCE APRIL 2023 399 PARENTS HAVE ATTENDED TRIPLE P**





# NEW COMMUNITY FRIDGE OPENS

We recently launched a new 'community fridge' in Lutterworth. Our Volunteer Development Officer Sam Peverett, has organised collections, trained volunteers and welcomed members of the public and community groups to the fridge. Lutterworth is our fifth community fridge to be opened to help reduce food waste and support the community.

**Sam Peverett, said:** *"We get given a lot of fresh items and as a result we're seeing some people trying fruit and vegetables they've never eaten before."*

*"We've also seen people swap recipe ideas while waiting for their bags and we know others make meals, or things like strawberry jam, for neighbours from the food."*

*"George Street Church even made hot meals using some of the ingredients, which it then served to the community for free."*

*"Our volunteers have really gelled well, and some have been sharing their own recipe ideas with people. They have been such an asset and have helped to make this all possible."*

**Deborah Taylor, county council cabinet member for children and families, said:** *"It's great to hear that the Lutterworth fridge is already having such a positive impact."*

*"Food waste is a really big issue across the country but the brilliant thing about community fridges is that people can make use of perfectly good food that would otherwise be thrown away."*

*"We'd like to thank all our volunteers and the businesses who support and help run our fridges. Your support is invaluable."*

The council's community fridges are run thanks to a partnership with the environmental charity Hubbub UK. They're stocked with donations from local residents, projects and supermarkets. In Lutterworth this includes E and R Tearooms and SweeSisters, but regular donors also include Greggs, Lidl, Aldi, Marks and Spencer, Sainsbury's, Morrisons, Tesco, Waitrose, Milner's Bakery and The Coop.

In the space of a year, the council's fridges have saved around 42 tonnes- the equivalent weight of around 21 shipping containers - of waste going to landfill.

Lutterworth Community Fridge is based in the Family Hub on Coventry Road LE17 4RB and opens from 10-11.30am Mondays and Wednesdays and 1-2pm on Thursdays.

# THE BISHOP OF LEICESTER VISITS A FAMILY HUB



Bishop Martyn joined the House of Lords in 2022, focusing on issues related to poverty. He is a member of the Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns, which works alongside the Racial Justice Unit to combat racism and prejudice within the Church of England. Additionally, he serves on the Church of England's Children and Young People Board, where he leads the 30k Project.

During his visit, he toured the building to observe the health clinics and the community fridge in action. He spoke with Health Visiting colleagues, our dedicated DWP worker, and team members from Adult and Family Learning. He learned about the successes of the extended Domestic Abuse team, the Teen Health initiative, and the extensive offerings for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). We discussed other aspects of our services, including the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme and initiatives aimed at Reducing Parental Conflict. He also had the opportunity to meet the Family Help team and even participated in a home visit to deliver a food parcel from the community fridge to a family in need of support.

Bishop Martyn is eager to continue our discussions about Family Hubs in the county and how collaborative approaches can support our most vulnerable children and their families.

We have another meeting scheduled to provide updates on key data, showcasing what we have achieved over the past 12 months. Additionally, we have recently learned that he is collaborating with other bishops to gather examples of projects from their local communities that support children and families. They intend to present these examples to the Government as potential sites for visits related to the Child Poverty Taskforce. He would like to propose our services for this initiative! Ongoing conversations regarding this matter are taking place, and regardless of whether or not a Government visit occurs, this demonstrates our 'outstanding' performance.

# GROWING THE FAMILY HUBS WEBSITE

We are urging all professionals to take some time to familiarise themselves with the content of the Family Hubs website as there are lots of helpful links, articles and information to help families, young people and professionals access services and support. If you have additional information that you would like including (or think of something that should be included) please drop us an email.



## FAMILY HUBS TEAM, WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



Our Family Hubs team operated on a temporary basis while we underwent a transformative phase. This period has been a valuable learning experience, providing us with the opportunity to work with diverse groups of children and their parents. Most importantly, we have built strong relationships with our colleagues and partners. These developments have established a solid foundation for creating better, integrated services for families across Leicestershire. As we enter a new phase, we would like to share updates on the next steps for our dedicated team.

Nicola has secured a position as a Local Area Coordinator and has been enjoying her new role since April. Nadia is taking a few weeks to relax while searching for her next job but has discovered a passion for project work through her experiences. Meanwhile, Hayley has obtained a three-year contract as a Project Officer, where she will lead the rollout of the Five to Thrive initiative across Leicestershire, while still keeping family hubs in view for future projects.

We truly couldn't have moved this project forward without their incredible determination and professionalism. Wishing them all the best and lots of luck in their next adventures!

MERRY  
*Christmas*

Family Hubs are all about collaboration and effective working partnerships to support families across the county. If you'd like to work with Family Hubs [get in touch](#) with us.