



*Grab a cuppa and enjoy
our updates*

Family Hub's funding update

As the initial grant funding for the Family Hubs has now ended, we remain committed to building on our progress so far. Our primary focus remains 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 and 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 pleased to receive additional funding for 2025-26.

Developing our Family Hubs network in Leicestershire focused on building on the legacy of our previous successes. With strong partnerships and the transition to a 0-19 year old model in 2019, we were well-positioned to continue to build on our existing work.

1 Our Family Hub team

Our team of six established reciprocal partnerships with Leicestershire libraries and enhanced our services at 16 additional sites with branded information stands and access to the Family Hubs website.

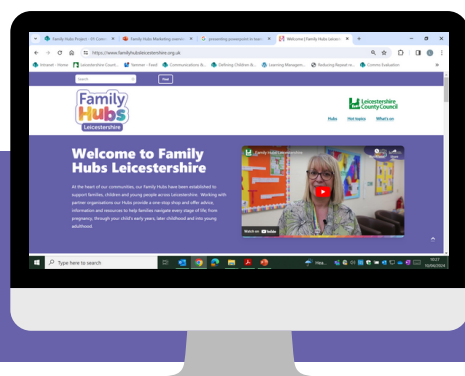


2 21 Family Hubs

Our 21 main Family Hubs have benefited from significant improvements and specific resources based on consultations with children and their families.

3 Family Hubs Conference

Our Family Hubs conferences in 2023 and 2024 helped solidify a shared understanding of the early help system. We showcased our commissioned film, which follows a family's journey through various challenges. This film is now used in team meetings and training sessions to reinforce our messages across our partnership.



One of our most notable developments has been our digital offerings. [The Family Hubs website](#) is continuously evolving, with regular updates added each week.



5 Relationships Matter

We officially launched our commitment to Reducing Parental Conflict, with senior leaders signing our Relationships Matter pledge at our 2023 conference. The local authority lead has secured training for more than 861 professionals and volunteers, including 108 health staff and 177 school staff from 97 educational institutions. Additionally, 246 workers have participated in the One Plus One RPC digital resources workshops since November 2023.

6 Supporting Specific Communities

Using local data, we identified and developed targeted projects to support gaps in services for specific communities. We commissioned Heads Up Leicester to focus on maternity equity in Loughborough. We continue to work with GATE (Gypsy and Traveller Equalities) to identify barriers to services and their staff are trained as relationship leaders who support the Reducing Parental Conflict agenda.

7 Delivering webinars

We worked collaboratively across the East Midlands Region to commission webinars on the difference between domestic abuse and parental conflict and jointly commissioned an evaluation of our work.

8 Keeping in touch

Branding and consistent communication have been crucial for maintaining our visibility and relevance. With confirmation of a new grant for the upcoming year, we will continue to focus on our current projects and will allow time to refocus our efforts to support children, young people, and their families.

9 Family Hubs Conference

We commissioned Coram Hemsall's to undertake a process evaluation of our first 18 months of Family Hubs. The report is due to be published in Spring 2025. This encompassed the development of a Theory of Change across the early help partnership.

One year of a Family Hubs Website

- Over the last year we have attracted 10,000 active users.
- Over the last 12 months the number of users finding us via a direct search has almost quadrupled. 4,306 compared to 900 in Feb 2024.
- 408 people have used the website because of a referral (signposting)
- Since January 2025 there have been 2941 visits to the site with 834 being first time users.
- The most visited pages being parenting support, early years information, finding the right volunteering opportunity for me. People have also accessed the young people's and the SEND tab.

A fond farewell to Julie



As we approach the Easter break, we are marking the end of an era. Julie Crookes, the project coordinator for Reducing Parental Conflict (Relationships Matter) since 2021, will take early retirement.

During her time in this role, Julie has tirelessly advocated for the importance of using a relational approach in our work. She has effectively engaged colleagues, emphasising the value of respectful relationships at the core of everything we do. She has been instrumental in providing training that enhances practitioners' and managers' understanding of these concepts.

Julie's impact extends beyond our children and family services; her efforts have created significant ripples throughout various partners and agencies, including those in the voluntary sector, health, police, education, Violence Reduction Network and many more. She has played a crucial role in both local and regional developments. Our last 'hurrah' was to join Julie as we celebrated Leicestershire's huge successes at our regional meeting in Nottingham followed by her final core development group.

We want to take this opportunity to wish her all the best in her retirement after accomplishing so much in a short time. Looking forward, the RPC initiative will continue to grow, and training and development will take place throughout the year.

Relationships Matter, we hear from Julie

"I have loved every minute as Project Coordinator, Relationships Matter in Leicestershire (September 2021-March 2025). It's not rocket science that children who experience their parents' frequent, intense, and unresolved arguing are likely to suffer as a result, and there are 20-30 years of evidence to support this!

"My aim has always been to work with as many partners as possible to raise awareness of the impact of parental conflict on children and young people and to provide FREE training and resources to as many practitioners and volunteers as possible. Early intervention to avoid escalation!

"When I first came into the post, the workers told me that they lacked the confidence and resources to ask the curious questions of parents about relationships. We therefore commissioned a toolkit packed with resources to use with parents and families, along with training. It's FREE for any practitioner or volunteer to access.



“To date, nearly 900 people have accessed the Amity Parental Conflict Practitioner Toolkit training from a broad range of sectors, including Family Help, the voluntary sector, schools, midwifery, healthcare professionals, district councils (Includes 108 from Health since May 2024 and 177 school staff from 97 schools).

“We have also purchased a licence from One Plus One for three evidence-based interventions and resources for practitioners to use with their families. These resources are available as digital self-help courses for parents or for them to work alongside a practitioner. Since November 2023, 272 workers have attended the digital resources workshops we hold (usually two or three times per term).

“I feel very proud of what we have achieved in Leicestershire and can enter retirement knowing that there are now strong foundations and a solid commitment for this RPC work to continue.”

Julie's highlights in her role:

1. The number of people who have accessed the RPC training. We've paid for the resources, so let's train as many people as possible to use them!
2. The formation of our Core Development Group (steering group). The passion, energy and ideas that come from this wonderful group that meets every couple of months.
3. Our passionate team of Relationship Leaders / train the trainers / RPC Champions who co-deliver the Parental Conflict Toolkit training. We now have 40 across different sectors!
4. The introduction of the Reducing Parental Conflict (RPC) workshops at the first Family Hubs Conference in June 2023 generated significant excitement. This was a lightbulb moment for many partners, leading senior leaders to sign our Relationships Matter in Leicestershire pledge.
5. Our partnership work with Leicestershire GATE (Gypsy and Traveller Equality) who work with one of the most invisible communities. We have trained the Project Manager, Jackie Duffy, and her three workers to become Relationship Leaders so they can raise the awareness of RPC in the Gypsy & Traveller community. Training has been provided via Heads Up (formerly Centre for Fun & Families) to seven community leaders who are now discussing RPC and healthy community relationships. I will never tire of listening to Jackie and her team's stories about their RPC conversations.
6. Reducing Parental Conflict has significantly impacted thinking and practice at Leicestershire County Council. Even before we had received confirmation of funding for 2025/26, I was delighted to hear that there was a commitment to keep RPC in Leicestershire beyond March 2025, irrespective of government funding.

Julie

Five to Thrive

Targeted Family Help have secured funding from Public Health to roll out the Five to Thrive model across LLR over a three-year period to support children and young people's mental health.

The model encourages secure attachments between caregivers and children to ensure positive brain development to support a child's emotional resilience. The framework suggests how we can build and maintain responsive parenting skills which meet the needs of children/young people through five key principles – Respond, Cuddle(Engage), Relax, Play, and Talk.

Five to Thrive is a neurological sequence and demonstrated in a tower of building blocks (bottom to top). It helps parents and caregivers notice positive interactions with their children; helping their child's confidence grow. This is also a method of supporting self-regulation within everyone, to help communicate calmly in all aspects of life.

Family Help already follow this model in our 0-2 pathway offer , but the goal is to embed this within other services such as Social Care, Health, Midwifery, Education, and the Voluntary sector across LLR for 0-19-year-olds, develop a 'building teenage resilience' session for Teen Health and Youth and Justice, how we can repair the tower if a block isn't met during the first 1001 critical days and supporting children with SEND.

The first year will concentrate on training LCC Children and Family Service staff and the Voluntary sector (Heads Up, Active Together and Family Lives). Training dates will be released soon. For more information contact Hayley Downing – Five to Thrive Project Coordinator



Spotlight on Leicestershire Family Hubs



Coram Hemsall has played a valuable role as our evaluation partner for Family Hubs. They have recently launched a new networking platform for the early years sector called 'hey!'.

Following the announcement of additional funding for Family Hubs, we received a request to provide an update on Leicestershire's progress, and of course, we are obliged to do so. We are thrilled that we're their first partnership article, shining a spotlight on our Leicestershire Family Hubs and highlighting the important work we do in our community. Read it here [Leicestershire Family Hubs](#)

Showcasing collaborative working

During the community engagement activities in 2023/2024, the family hubs engagement workers established a relationship with a practice manager from a Primary Care Network (PCN) that oversees several surgeries in Melton and South Charnwood. They agreed to explore a collaborative approach to support a universal group of families who typically occupy clinical appointment time to seek advice often related to key public health messages.

As Family Hubs already hosted universal stay-and-play sessions run by volunteers, it was proposed that these sessions serve as a natural forum for general information sessions delivered by key health staff from Latham House Surgery. This approach reduced the need for advertising, as the appropriate families were already in attendance, allowing even those who might not ordinarily participate to drop in.

The first session at Venture House Family Hub focused on vaccinations – particularly Whooping Cough (due to a rise in cases in Nottinghamshire) and Measles – presented by Dr Virginia Ashman and Lead Vaccination Nurse Julie Green. Approximately 38 parents and children attended this session, which was a success. So much so that additional sessions were scheduled, with topics covering winter illnesses, self-care at home, and the various services available (GP, Pharmacy, ILL).

Dr Khoosal hosted the winter illness session, which attracted 18 families. He also addressed topics such as sleep patterns, constipation, potty training, viral infections, ADHD/Autism concerns, and eczema. About one-third of the parents present would have usually made an appointment, but by sharing the information in this session, appointments were kept free.

We are currently discussing how we could further develop this offering to continue raising community resilience, increasing awareness of family hubs and how to access support. More importantly, we aim to foster collaborative approaches in local areas to maintain effective working relationships that benefit children and their families.



Mental Health Link Worker Pilot

In early 2023, the Charnwood Family Help team 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 programme, which aims to improve outcomes for families with more complex needs. Supporting Families is built on the principle of whole family working and whole family assessment. This project aims to foster connections between the Family Help team and the Adult Social Care mental health teams, ensuring a clear pathway for children and adults who require assistance and support. It also aims to enhance the understanding among practitioners and managers in both services about the available support and how to access it.

This pilot project has provided a valuable opportunity to explore ways to improve joint working between services. It has encouraged innovative approaches to collaboration between the teams that have not been previously considered. Overall, this pilot is a great example of teamwork aimed at enhancing outcomes for children and their families through creative thinking and the willingness to explore new practices.

Mental Health Cafe thriving in Lutterworth

Teresa, Neighbourhood Lead (Mental Health) Harborough and Lutterworth

Neighbourhood Mental Health Cafés are available throughout Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland providing supportive environments for individuals experiencing mental health challenges. These cafés are intended for those who do not require immediate specialised mental health services. However, there are procedures in place to assist anyone who arrives needing more specialised assistance.

Various community organisations manage these cafés, with Beacon Care overseeing the Lutterworth Café. As the Neighbourhood Mental Health Lead for Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust, I collaborate with Beacon Care to ensure the café meets best practices and operates effectively. Notably, Beacon Care has been successful in reaching out to diverse communities, including the Travellers in Lutterworth and the Harborough areas, who can often be difficult to engage.

Recently, we sought a new partner to host our café and decided to collaborate with the Harborough Family Hub. After conducting risk assessments and some organisational efforts, we relocated our three-hour sessions to the hub.

The staff at the Harborough Family Hub have been exceptionally accommodating. They quickly grasped the purpose of the café and worked diligently to facilitate a smooth transition, ensuring all necessary protocols were adhered to.

The hub's busy car park also provides a level of discretion that is appreciated by many service users, particularly in communities where mental health issues may not be widely understood.

The second café session posed more challenges due to established days and times. Our initial goal was to maintain these schedules, as word of mouth significantly influences café attendance. Thanks to Lesley and her colleague at the hub, we were able to identify available slots for the second session. Their support and patience were invaluable as we coordinated the schedules of the café session workers.

Without the support of the Hub, finding alternative venues for the café would have been quite challenging. Currently, I believe the Lutterworth Café has one of the best locations in the Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland area, and many service users have shared positive feedback about the welcoming atmosphere of the space. Thank you to everyone who played a role in making this partnership successful.

Spotlight on Centre Support Assistants

Family Hubs need a lot of attention, from ensuring the building is safe and ready for the day to juggling room bookings and creating informative displays. Centre Support Assistants are usually based in one Family Hub so that children and families have some consistency, but they can often cover at other hubs across their locality. In this edition of our newsletter, Jo shares a bit about her job as a Centre Support Assistant.



"My role as a Centre Support Assistant is varied yet familiar. Every day starts with a check of the building and identifying any issues, ensuring the centre is safe to open and operate. From that moment, we climb aboard the Family Hub train and see what adventures the day brings!

"We might be researching and celebrating equality, diversity, and inclusion in a display, recording registers, holding fire drills or greeting the newest members of the 0-2 pathway group with a big smile.

"CSAs are the friendly faces you see when you arrive and the last ones to wave you off as you leave! We manage social media for our local areas and can point you to the right resources for any situation. Think of us as your go-to information hub in the Family Hubs, always ready to assist and connect you with what you need.

- If you need to know when the stay and play sessions are, we have that information.
- Can't quite remember the name of the health visitor you need to contact, we speak to them regularly and can put you in touch with their team.
- Do you know a family that needs a food bank referral or needs to access our community fridges? We can assist you in arranging this!

"No two days are ever the same! Centre Support Assistants = Can Support Always (or give you some pointers 😊). CSAs support not only families visiting our hubs but also assist colleagues and professionals with inquiries, room bookings, and any other needs they may have while working in our facilities."

We also received some lovely praise for Jo

"I wanted to email to feedback how brilliant Jo is. I've been linking in with the hubs for quite a while now, and everyone on the team has been amazing, helpful, and collaborative, but Jo is always going the extra mile. I often bother her with questions, connections and ideas and she is always happy to help, is really knowledgeable and positive.

I've also sat in on a number of conversations she's had with families using the hub, other professionals, and groups, and they always feel really welcome and included and positive interacting with her. I know you know this already about Jo, but I wanted to email to let you know"

If you're considering visiting a hub but are unsure of what to expect, you can find information on our [website](#). Each hub features a short video that gives you a tour of the centre, helping you know what to expect when you first arrive.

Volunteering Opportunities

We have many roles for people who want to volunteer in their local community within the Targeted Family Help Service.

In our Family Hubs across the county you might find our community fridge volunteers, distributing food, reducing waste and helping their community. And our stay and play volunteers, who are so passionate about creating fun, safe, learning spaces for children. Our volunteers also run wellbeing cafe for parents and support our staff in targeted groups.

Our fantastic volunteers are supported by Volunteer Development Officers in each locality who recruit and manage the volunteer offer in their area. They offer a wide range of training to enable volunteers to feel confident in their role and ongoing support, either individually or in groups is provided. We want to see our volunteers succeed and thrive in whatever their goals are in volunteering and beyond.

If you (or someone you might be supporting) would like to hear more about opportunities for volunteering, [find out more here](#).



Supporting our communities

We work tirelessly to provide support and opportunities for children and families throughout our county. This support takes many forms, from assisting families and organising fun holiday sessions for kids to helping children and young people find a nurturing environment that enables them to thrive. With your support, you can spread the word about some of the great things we are doing to support our communities.



Find out About Fostering with Leicestershire County Council

Residents interested in learning more about fostering are invited to learn more at one of Leicestershire County Council's information events.

With over 700 children and young people currently living in care across Leicestershire, more people are being encouraged to consider fostering, no matter their professional background, skills or current circumstances.

'Find Out About Fostering' information events are held both virtually and in-person (County Hall, Glenfield, LE3 8RA) throughout the year, running from 6:30pm – 8:30pm.

Discussions will focus on different ways to foster, support and training, available payments and allowances, and the application process.

Sessions promise to be informal and low-key, with no pressure to sign up to anything on the night. Each event will include the opportunity to ask the fostering team and current foster carers any questions you may have.

Upcoming virtual 'Find Out About Fostering' events:

- Thursday 3 April 2025
- Wednesday 14 May 2025
- Wednesday 4 June 2025
- Thursday 26 June 2025

Upcoming in-person 'Find Out About Fostering' events:

- Tuesday 22 April 2025
- Tuesday 15 July 2025



People are encouraged to book their place by filling out the ['Join a fostering event' form](#) at [For more information about fostering, email \[fostering@leics.gov.uk\]\(mailto:fostering@leics.gov.uk\), or call 0116 305 0505.](#)

FREE stay and play sessions

Our family hubs provide a fun and welcoming space for children to play and learn. Through our free stay-and-play sessions, children can engage in crafts, sensory play, and enjoy spending time with others. These sessions are also a wonderful opportunity for parents and carers to meet other families and connect with like-minded individuals. It's truly a supportive environment, just like the experience of Emma and her little girl, Star.





"Getting messy with crafts and being outside is one of Star's favourite activities at her play session. It also gives me a chance to catch up with other mums who have become good friends".

[Book a session at your local centre.](#)

Start for Life Events



Start for Life Events are designed for children aged 0 to 2 years to help them learn, grow, and thrive! From messy play to sensory activities, these free sessions support early development.

-  Build confidence in language and communication skills
-  Encourage creativity and problem-solving
-  Support sensory and brain development
-  Improve coordination and movement skills

Running until April 17th at Family Hubs across Leicestershire, families can [book a space](#) through our website.

Baby Fortnight

This year, Baby Fortnight will be held from April 28th to May 9th. Various events are scheduled across our county, including in Oadby & Wigston, Braunstone, Market Harborough, Melton, Coalville, Charnwood, and Hinckley. Details about the events will be available on our [family hubs website](#).

Book your child's HAF holiday club place this Easter!

FREE holiday sessions at venues across Leicestershire for children aged 5 – 16 receiving benefits related free school meals. Sessions offer a variety of activities including sports, art and crafts, music, drama and more, PLUS a nutritious meal.

Secure a
place now:



Vouchers will be
arriving in March