**Strengthening Families through Early Help**

**Locality/Partnership Plus/Complex Multi-Agency Meetings**

**Terms of Reference**

# **Aim**

* Provide relevant, timely support to families, some of whom will be included in the Troubled Families Programme.
* Work with families at the earliest stage to make positive changes and build their resilience, at the same time reducing the chance that they will need further support in the future.
* Provide more emphasis on allocating the right intervention to families with more complex needs and developing a shared responsibility to agree how this is delivered.
* To provide a formalised arrangement for using the Strengthening Families Information Sharing Agreement to enable practical measured activity to deliver ‘significant and sustained’ outcomes.
* To provide a structured procedure enabling front line workers to bring their agencies intelligence, knowledge, skills and experience to analyse and respond to local families and issues.

**Objectives**

* To implement an exchange of information between front line workers in communities.
* To hold individuals and services/partners responsible for implementing actions to deal with families identified by the group.
* To provide feedback to individuals and community groups affected on the activities being undertaken.
* To provide information and support to Community groups.

**Meetings Structure**

These meetings provide a forum where agencies who are actively delivering early help, but need additional information and services to understand and promote welfare for the whole family, can share information and develop plans for families that promote whole family wellbeing and outcomes can be measured against the Strengthening Families Outcomes Plan. These meetings will be responsible for developing, implementing and monitoring support plans for families identified in need of Early Help and/or meet the Troubled Families Criteria. Area based community work and commissioning services/resources around the family will be key to the success of the plans.

* All information should be treated with the utmost confidentiality and should not be divulged to any member of the public, or any other party.
* These meetings will be co-ordinated by a nominated chair and, in the majority of cases, local staff who either know or are working with the family who will be able to progress the matters raised. The purpose of the meetings is to identify local solutions or gaps in provision and make sure that families receive the support they need to achieve the outcomes identified in the plan.
* Each meeting will be governed by the Strengthening Families Information Sharing Agreement and the ECINS memorandum of Understanding, agency accountability and confidentiality practice.
* All agencies will receive a list of those families to be discussed at the closed session of the Locality Meetings via ECINS at least 5 working days before the scheduled meeting. Only professionals who know or who are working with the family should attend the designated meeting.
* Partners should bring all their relevant information to the meetings so the family can be discussed comprehensively – this will mean that decisions can be taken quickly and relevant feedback taken to local groups.
* Prior to each session professionals must sign the Confidentiality Declaration
* Quoracy is not needed for information sharing to take place.
* Decisions taken at the meeting around actions and named individuals will be recorded on the action plan. Reports on progress and the journey towards identified outcomes will be recorded on the families plan by the relevant named professional. All communication outside of the meeting must be carried out using secure means.

**Partner Contributions**

* Active and consistent participation from front line agencies through nomination of staff
* Commitment to local solutions
* Effective partnership working and transparency in information sharing
* Accountability of Officers for carrying out assigned actions
* Effective monitoring and reporting of actions to the partnership through ECINS and local meetings.
* Members of the meeting understand that it is important that people remain confident that their personal information is kept safe and secure.

**Information Exchange**

* Information will be exchanged under the Strengthening Families Information Sharing Agreement. Discussions at the meeting will be confidential to representatives of organisations which have signed the Protocol.
* Any new agencies who wish to participate in these meetings may apply to the Strengthening Families team to become signatories of the Information Sharing Agreement.
* Information sharing is key to the Governments goal of delivering better, more efficient public services that are coordinated around the needs of children, young people and families. Information sharing is vital for improving outcomes for all Families and their communities.

**The 7 Golden Rules for Information Sharing:**

* The Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing information but provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately
* Be open and honest with the person / their family where appropriate, from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will or could be shared or seek their agreement unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
* Seek advice if you are in any doubt without disclosing the identity of the person / family where possible
* Share with consent where appropriate and where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent if, in your judgment, that lack of consent can be overridden in the public interest. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case.
* Consider safety and well-being. Base your information sharing decisions on considerations of safety and well-being of the person / family and others who may be affected by their actions.
* Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purposed for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those people who need to have it, is accurate and is up to date, is shared in a timely fashion and is shared securely.
* Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.