

# What is Family Safeguarding?



**The Centre for Family  
Safeguarding Practice**





# Family Safeguarding in England

There are currently 16 LAs who have, or are implementing FS – just over 10%.

We are working with a further 10 authorities hoping to implement in 2022

# What's the problem?

- Nationally the number of children in care has doubled in last 20 years (Cafcass 2018)
- Babies removed at birth has doubled over last 10 years (based on likelihood of significant harm)
- Only 50% of care proceedings result in removal of children
- Impact of this on parents and children is unknown
- Children's and Adult's services have become very separated strategically and operationally
- Parents find it hard to access help and support to address their problems
- System doesn't support open, honest relationships with families or partnership working
- Research shows that children are more likely to be harmed when experiencing parental domestic abuse; when living in families where there is drug and alcohol misuse; and where parental mental health is poor-we need to solve those problems together by working on a whole family basis

Resources used for assessment and monitoring,  
not supporting change

Experts in process not influencing change

Human Rights and empowerment vs oppressive  
practice that blames parents

Offering autonomy to make choices

Recognising that children in care may not be  
better off in longer term

Moving away from identifying and managing  
risks to meeting family needs

Why do we  
need to change?

# Family Safeguarding

A whole family approach to working with children and families that supports parents to create sustained change for themselves and for their family

## Our vision

To keep more children safe at home with their families

## What is it?

A multi-disciplinary team approach - working **with** parents; providing help and support to create lasting change. Reducing bureaucracy to free up more time for purposeful direct work with families

## Outcomes for children & families

- Reducing likelihood of abuse and neglect in families
- Fewer children needing to be in care or adopted
- Families becoming more resilient & developing greater confidence in their skills



## Values & Beliefs

### Collaborative

Practitioners and families are partners - we do things *with* people, not *to* them

### Strengths-based

All families have strengths, and we focus on using strengths to support change

### Purposeful

Our role is to meet child and family needs & give families the right support, first time

### Rights-based

Families have a right to help and support for their children, and the autonomy to make choices

### Empathic

We listen carefully to families & offer a helping hand to create change for children

### Aspirational

We want the best for families and to help them to sustain change



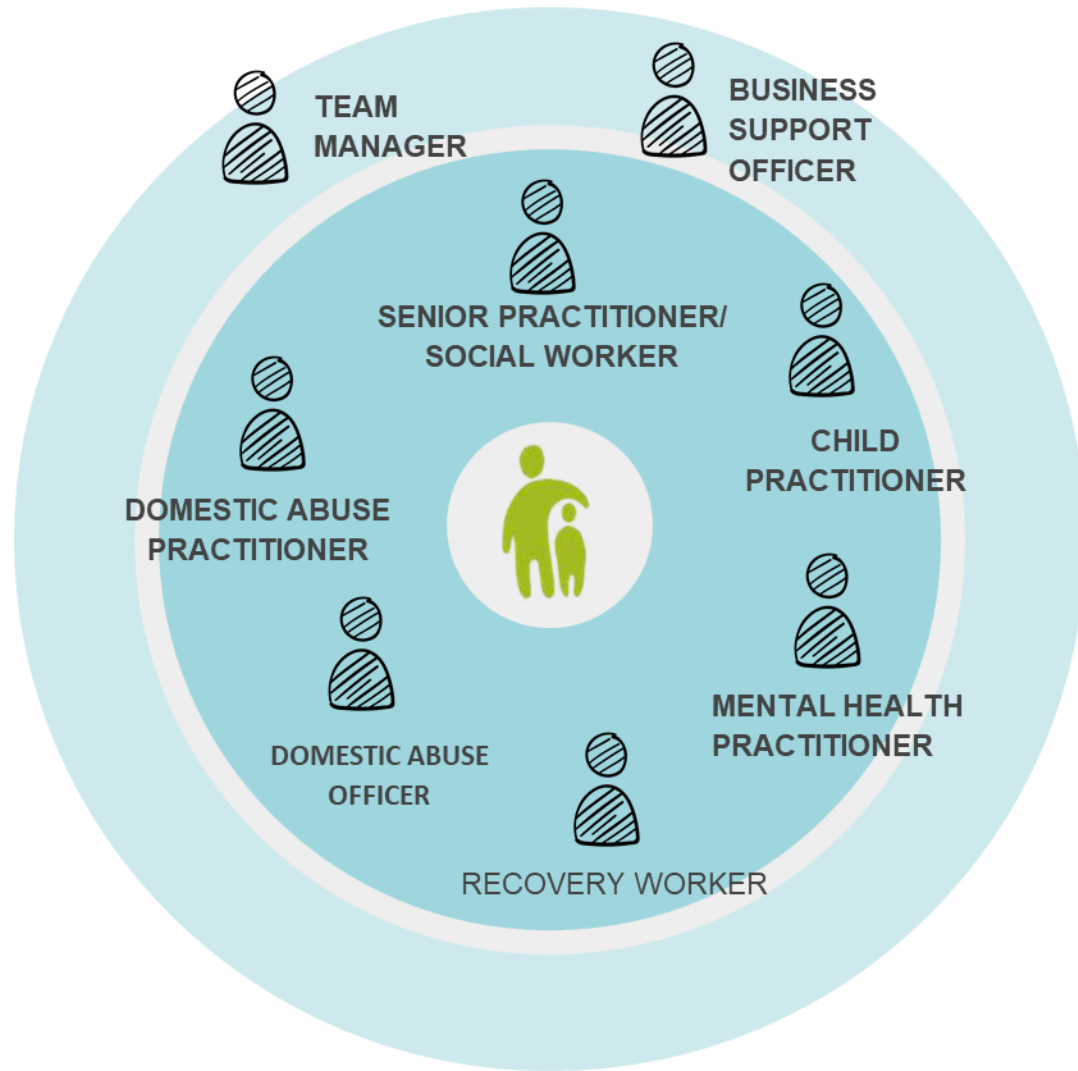
Work with families where there are children :

- in need, who are experiencing significant impairment to health or development as a result of issues in their family;
- the subject of CP Plans, who are experiencing significant harm as a result of intra-familial abuse or neglect;
- who are the subject of family law proceedings or pre-proceedings

## What do FS Teams do?



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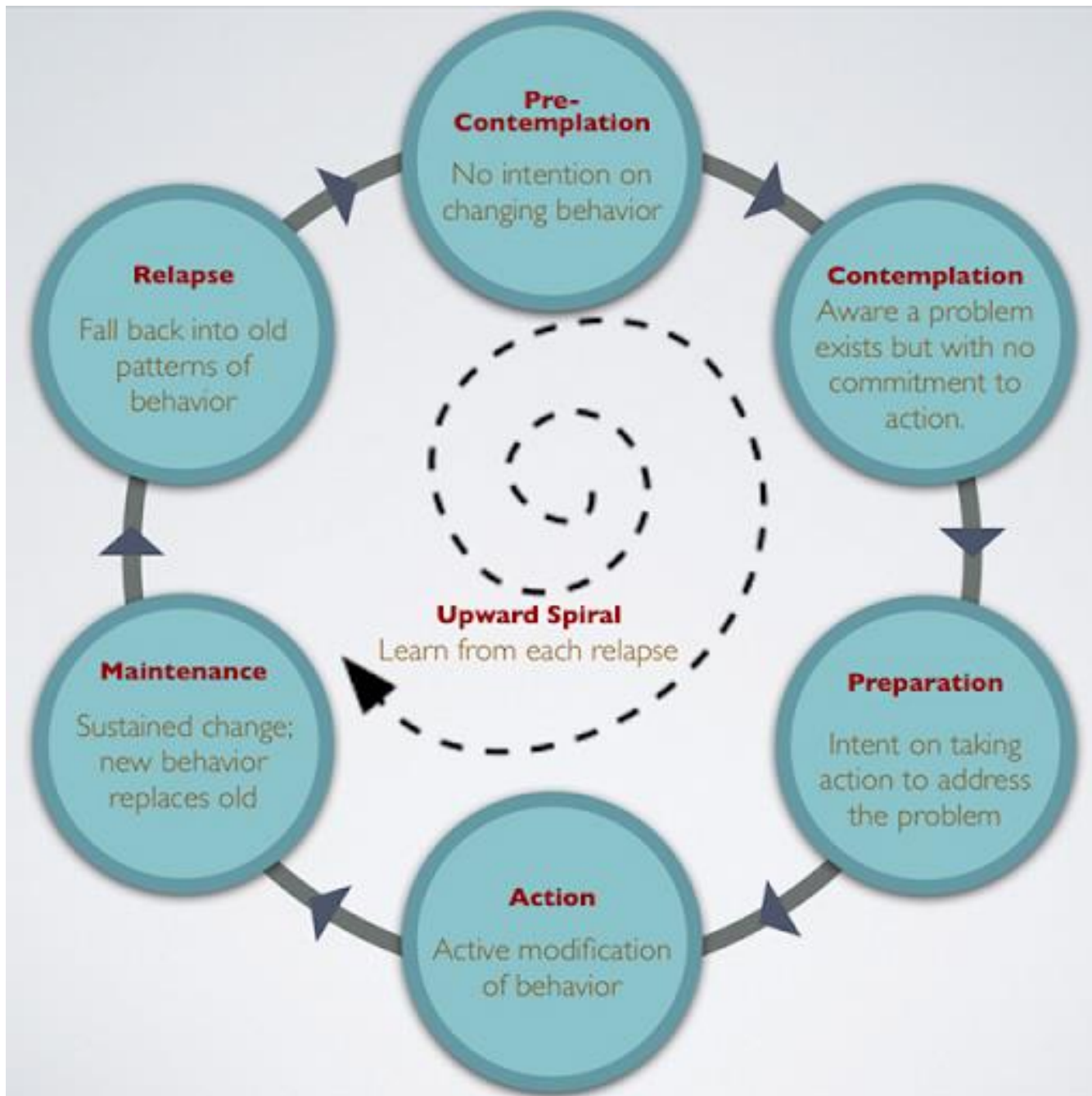
**Supervised and supported by the Head of Service, Service Managers, Team Managers, Senior Practitioners, and Business Support Officers**

## The Multidisciplinary Team

Research tells us that the parenting factors that create the most vulnerabilities, and therefore potential harm to children, are parental domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental ill-health, especially in families where all 3 factors co-exist together.

We work in multi-disciplinary teams with the full range of skills necessary to address those threats to children's well being





# Motivational Interviewing

Motivational Interviewing is at the heart of our practice and all workers in the FS Team use it as a tool to improve engagement and encourage change. Motivational Interviewing (MI) is described as a “collaborative conversation style for strengthening a person’s own motivation and commitment to change”



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## What is MI?

- Guided counselling to create behaviour change



Aesop's  
Fable



Up to 45% reduction in children needing a Child Protection Plan  
Up to 30% fewer children needing to come into care

Up to 66 % reduction in repeat police call outs to domestic abuse incidents



Average £2million reduction in expenditure for the LA in first year;  
annual savings exceed annual delivery costs within two years

York Report (DfE 2020) highlighted the following across the five initial adopter sites:

- Practitioners, managers and leaders expressed overwhelming support for Family Safeguarding, as an effective model of delivery for children's services.
- Parents and carers who contributed, stated that they had 'made lasting, beneficial changes to their lives' as a result of the model.
- Multidisciplinary working, specifically the integration of adult workers, is the foremost success factor of Family Safeguarding.
- What Works Report Centre for Excellence– Evaluation of the Implementation in Cambridgeshire (June 2021)

## Is Family Safeguarding making a difference ?



## Together we....

- Work as one team, sharing information, relying on each other's knowledge & skills
- Focus on achieving better outcomes by creating change
- Increase our knowledge and build our skills through shared practice model (MI)
- Prioritise our reflective group supervision & make decisions together, as one team
- Keep innovating, together, via our community of practice
- Build on family strengths, creating trust & confidence, not naive
- Work in partnership with families
- Provide real help and support, that families choose to have
- Keep families together where in best interests of the child, but don't hesitate to act when protection is necessary
- Fund adult specialists on partnership basis

How does  
working on a  
family basis  
produce these  
outcomes?

# Further Reading

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The Children Act 1989

[The Children Act 1989](#)

Children Looked After in England Statistics

[Children looked after in England national statistics](#)

Care Crisis Review 2018, Family Rights Group

[The Care Crisis Review: Options for Change - Family Rights Group \(frg.org.uk\)](#)

Holding the Risk 2018, Sir James Mc Farlane

[Lecture by Lord Justice McFarlane: Holding the risk - The balance between child protection and the right to family life \(judiciary.uk\)](#)

Clear Blue Water 2018 Isabelle Trowler & University of Sheffield

[Sheffield\\_Solutions\\_Clear\\_Blue\\_Water\\_Full\\_Report.pdf](#)

NSPCC How Safe Are Our Children annual reports

[How safe are our children? 2020 | NSPCC Learning](#)



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