

Wolverhampton City Council

**OPEN EXECUTIVE
DECISION ITEM (AMBER)**

Cabinet (Resources) Panel

Date **06 JULY 2010**

Portfolio(s) **CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE / COUNCILLOR MRS C MILLS**

Originating Service Group(s) **CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE**

Contact Officer(s) **BRIDGET PUGH**

Telephone Number(s) **01902 554180**

Title **THE WOLVERHAMPTON PARENTING STRATEGY – ACCEPTANCE OF
THINK FAMILY GRANT AND ADOPTION OF GUIDELINES FOR
SUPPORTING FAMILY INTERVENTION PROGRAMME (FIP) FAMILIES
THROUGH THE THINK FAMILY GRANT**

KEY DECISION: YES/NO
IN FORWARD PLAN: YES/NO

RECOMMENDATION

1. That permission is granted to accept the allocation of the ‘Think Family’ grant to support the delivery of the Wolverhampton Parenting Strategy, including the Youth Crime Family Intervention Project (YCFIP) and the Housing Challenge Family Intervention Project (HCFIP) in line with the requirements of the Department for Education’s ‘Think Family’ Grant and as part of the local approach to supporting families in need.

2. That the guidelines for supporting FIP Families through the ‘Think Family Grant’ (attached as Appendix 1) are adopted and officers are granted delegated authority to administer this part of the grant against this guidance.

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report describes the latest developments in the implementation of local parenting strategies as required by the Department for Education (DfE). Additional resources are being made available through the DfE's Think Family Grant or the delivery of identified strategic objectives; these require significant joint working locally between statutory and partner agencies.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Effective parenting and family support remains a high priority for government with the dual purpose of improving the quality of family life and the well-being of families plus maximising the positive effect of that in support of raising standards of achievement for children and young people. All local authorities in England and Wales have been required to develop a Parenting Support Strategy, and at its meeting in March 2008, the local Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership approved the final draft of the Wolverhampton Parenting & Family Support Strategy for submission to Government Office of the West Midlands; it has also been published locally. This is now supported by an action plan agreed by a wide range of agencies across the city.
- 2.2 There is currently a wide range of parenting support in the city of Wolverhampton including Parenting Support Advisers (PSAs) based in the Multi Agency Support Teams (MASTs) who deliver early intervention and prevention services to families, and Youth Crime Family Intervention Project (FIP) PSAs who provide very intensive interventions.
- 2.3 All Family Intervention Projects (FIPs) are intensive programmes of support for the most vulnerable families who are likely to be known to, and supported by, a range of services and for whom a more co-ordinated approach is the ideal. Key workers within the programmes, including Youth Crime FIPs, carry a workload of only five or six families but offer intensive and extensive support to a number of members of the family, including children, young people and parents.
- 2.4 FIPs undertake a detailed assessment of the needs of families who are often already well known to a variety of agencies as displaying unacceptable behaviour, and there is a recognition by the DfE that there are occasions on which a limited amount of funding could assist a family to stop this behaviour. These would be linked to the in depth whole family assessments and guidelines have been developed by a number of the pilot authorities which have been adapted for use in Wolverhampton. The 'Think Family' approach contains an element to ensure this support is available to families.

3. CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 In 2009 all local authorities were invited to apply for resources to expand current Family Intervention Projects to include partnerships with local social housing providers to support at risk of eviction due to anti social behaviour and other housing related issues. In March 2010, the local authority was notified both of its success in the latest bidding round for the Housing Challenge FIP and the amount of the 'Think Family' grant for the financial year 2010-11. This is an important development in providing bespoke support for local families within the Children & Young People's 'Think Family' approach.
- 3.2 The 'Think Family' grant provides resources, matched with funding from housing providers, to employ FIP key workers and to provide a level of financial support to families as part of the programme. In order to access this funding, families need to agree to participate in a formally action plan drawn up with the key worker; the development of

this needs to be supported by clear guidelines to ensure accountability, due process and to demonstrate that there is a clear and unequivocal link between the identified needs of vulnerable families and any expenditure allocated. A copy of these guidelines is attached as Appendix 1 for approval.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS **REF: (LS/23062010/B)**

- 4.1 The development of the national 'Think Family' approach and Parenting Strategies by all local authorities has given rise to additional resources being made available through the DfE for the delivery of identified strategic objectives. The total DfE 'Think Family' Grant for the financial year 2010/11 in Wolverhampton is £551,848 with Wolverhampton Homes and Midland Heart Housing Association match funding amounting to £110,000. All Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) are also expected to make a small contribution from existing Youth Justice Board (YJB) grant; for the Wolverhampton YOT this amounts to £13,307 p.a.
- 4.2 Initial allocations were made for the 'Think Family' Grant to include funding for
- two Parenting Expert posts, announced initially in the 2007 Children's Plan;
 - the delivery of the Parenting Early Intervention Programme (PEIP), and
 - the delivery and expansion of the Youth Crime FIP and Housing Challenge FIP

This represents no additional cost to the local authority main-line budget and will be fixed term until the end of March 2011. The DfE are expected to monitor these developments closely including the financial commitment.

5. EQUALITY IMPACT

- 5.1 The Parenting Strategy and subsequent 'Think Family' proposals are based on significant audit work undertaken with specific groups of parents and professionals. With their emphasis on early intervention and prevention, PSAs for Multi-Agency Support Teams (MASTs) are making a significant contribution to supporting the delivery of targeted work to families at an early stage. However, for some families where the needs have escalated or are persistent, the FIPs provide much needed, more intensive holistic support. As such, and working with a wide range of statutory, community and voluntary sector partners, they are key in reaching some of the city's more vulnerable families.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct legal implications to this report.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no direct environmental implications to this report.

8. SCHEDULE OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

20 Mar 2007	Parenting Strategy Support Grant
04 Nov 2008	Cabinet Resources Panel - "The Wolverhampton Parenting Strategy - Establishment of Parent Support Adviser and Parenting Expert Posts".
June 2009	Cabinet Resources Panel - "The Wolverhampton Parenting Strategy – Establishment of additional Parenting Support Adviser for Youth Crime and Family Intervention

Think Family FIP Fund

Funding Scheme for grants to support FIP families

2010/11

**This framework is for Family Intervention practitioners using
Think Family Grant funding to support FIP families living in
Wolverhampton**

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1. Background

Family Intervention Projects (FIP)

Family Intervention Projects (FIPS) offer intensive support to families with chaotic lives, who are finding it difficult to cope and who are on the cusp of or at risk of criminal activity, anti-social behaviour, eviction or one of the risk factors identified by the DfE Families at Risk Division.

Key workers provide support for families through the referral to closure model. They will be working within a Family Intervention Project; carry a small case load of families who have a wide variety of challenges including issues of anti social behaviour, drugs and alcohol and domestic violence and may identify the need for spending to support the implementation plan of their individual needs, called the FIP Family Action Plan. It is important therefore to develop this framework so that, where appropriate, the FIP can commission services tailored to each child's needs linked to the FIP Family Action Plan.

The FIP manager/Senior FIP worker will hold a budget designed to introduce a speedier, more personalised and more effective response to meeting additional needs as a result of assessments completed and outcome focused action plans leading to more tangible improved outcomes for children and young people.

2. FIP funding Aims and Objectives

2.1. Aim:

The delegation of funds to the FIP will enable the key workers to access part of the Think Family Grant to enable the FIP key-worker to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and young people by the development of personalised services, which meet their needs and the needs of their family as identified by the Family Contract.

2.2. Objectives:

The Think Family FIP Fund will

- Use this scheme of one-off payments to develop sustainable services suitable to the needs of individual children, young people and families and to improve outcomes for them
- shift the focus of decision making and resource allocation closer to the family and the Key Worker working with them

- involve families, children and young people in the identification of service needs both to meet their own needs and to help in the shaping and commissioning of some services through the development of a Family Action Plan
- develop the capacity of families to meet their own needs and of communities to support their more vulnerable members
- complement implementation of other initiatives supporting families in the City
- develop flexibility and creativity amongst practitioners and reduce ineffective and costly barriers to service delivery

3. Scope of the Think Family FIP Fund

- a) ***The budget cannot be used to purchase services for children with more complex needs requiring statutory intervention*** –The budget is designed to meet the needs as of FIP families as part of their FIP family action plan.
- b) ***The budget should not be used to purchase any service, which is the statutory responsibility for someone else to provide*** – i.e. the budget should not be used so that agencies can avoid paying for services or as a means for short circuiting other processes. E.g. it is the responsibility of registered social landlords to repair properties.
- c) ***The budget is not to be used for income maintenance***, for example, asylum seekers and refugees, or overstaying families who are not eligible for benefits. The purpose of the budget is not to provide a substitute for inadequacies/gaps in the benefit system.
- d) All other possible means of funding or accessing the required services, goods or equipment must have been exhausted before allocating the funding from the Think Family budget. For example the FIP key-worker should;
- e) Ensure all relevant benefits such as working tax credits, Carers Allowance, or Disability Living Allowance are claimed and utilised appropriately i.e. purchasing childcare or personal care.
- f) In the first instance try to access local community services e.g. playgroups, stay and play sessions, free pre-school nursery places, activities and services provided by integrated youth etc
- g) In the first instance try to access local charity services for household goods and health & safety equipment, where available

- h) Any items or services purchased represent good value for money, for example generic items to be purchased rather than branded items.
- i) Money to support or purchase items for one member of the family will not normally be paid to any other members of the FIP family.
- j) Where goods or services are supplied over a period of time the FIP Family should continue to comply with the FIP Family Action Plan, goods or services may be withdrawn if there is a lack of compliance with the family action plan
- k) Payment will be withdrawn if the need for the goods or services no longer exists before the expiry of the FIP Family Action Plan.

4. Access Criteria

4.1. The following criteria will have to be met for families to be eligible for the FIP Family Fund

- The children must be pre-birth to 18 years old.
- The family must have had needs assessed via a FIP Parenting action plan identifying desired outcomes, linking these outcomes to the spending and demonstrating a multi-agency support package.
- The family must have an allocated FIP key worker.

4.2. Funding available

- The FIP key worker, in partnership with the child, young person and family, can access funding up to £500 per child. In situations where there are a large number of children in a family, the lead practitioner should seek guidance from a manager. It is expected that in most cases the funding used will be significantly less than £1000.

5. Purchasing criteria

The following list is intended to give a general idea of the kinds of goods or services that may be purchased, it is not intended to be an exhaustive list;

Any service, goods, item of equipment etc. which will meet a need identified through the FIP family action plan process. and cannot be supplied by other means It must be possible to 'spot' purchase the service: the service can be in the public, voluntary, independent or private sector within the financial rules of public sector funding.

Types of services

- Childcare / nursery place / play scheme
- Sitting service
- Learning mentor
- Sessional support
- Mediation
- Counselling
- Cleaning
- Garden services
- Transport services

Types of Activities

- Leisure activities
- Club fees
- School holiday activities
- Youth activities
- Workshops

Types of Equipment

- White goods e.g. washing machines
- Beds
- Furniture etc

Housing repairs

Where the FIP Family Action Plan has identified that particular housing needs will improve the family's situation e.g. decoration material for a child's bedroom.

Cash payments

One off, low cost payments such as clothing e.g. school uniform, mobile phone top up cards etc. where the purchase of such items is specifically referred to in the FIP Family Action Plan

Debt Clearance

In most circumstances it will not be possible to use the money to satisfy existing debts, there may however be circumstances in which small amounts of money could be used to, for example, meet rent arrears that are preventing the family from accessing suitable housing. This type of payment must be conditional on the family accessing debt advice / money management and could only be approved with agreement from the relevant senior manager.

6. Guidance for Purchasing Services

Principles

- The safety of the child is of paramount importance when purchasing goods/services from public funds
- Any equipment that is bought should adhere to British Safety Standards and any installations should be carried out by appropriately qualified /certified professional.
- Any equipment purchased will remain the property of the council for duration of the FIP Family Action Plan or an agreed period and should not be resold without prior agreement from the project manager.
- Any person that is employed directly by the use of this budget, and has direct contact with children, should be engaged via an approved agency. It will be expected that as part of the agency's registration criteria, appropriate safety checks will be in place including Enhanced Criminal Records Bureaux (CRB) checks
- The budget will not be used to employ informal carers e.g. friends/ neighbours.
- Any services purchased should have
- A track record of effectiveness, and be appropriately registered
- Should demonstrate effective value for money
- Should be delivered as part of a broader package of support for vulnerable children and their families
- Should be from an approved list and demonstrate effective value for money

In addition to being part of the FIP Family Action Plan the purchase of goods/services must be:

- Legal
- Justified
- Value for money
- Accountable

Access to the FIP Family Fund requires a commitment from the key worker and the finance officers to obtain value for money i.e. the lowest priced goods that meet the requirements of the family. In some circumstances services, for example, childcare provision will be chosen based on the locality of the services, and the ability of any given provider to meet the needs of the child/children, rather than the cheapest provision.

Useful Addresses – Contact details –

For information about services within Wolverhampton please use The Family Services Directory www.wolverhamptonfsd.org.uk and
The Family Information Service: Free phone 0800 294 9939
10 King Street,
Wolverhampton
WV1 1ST
Email enquiries@wolvesfis.com
Minicom; 01902 574246

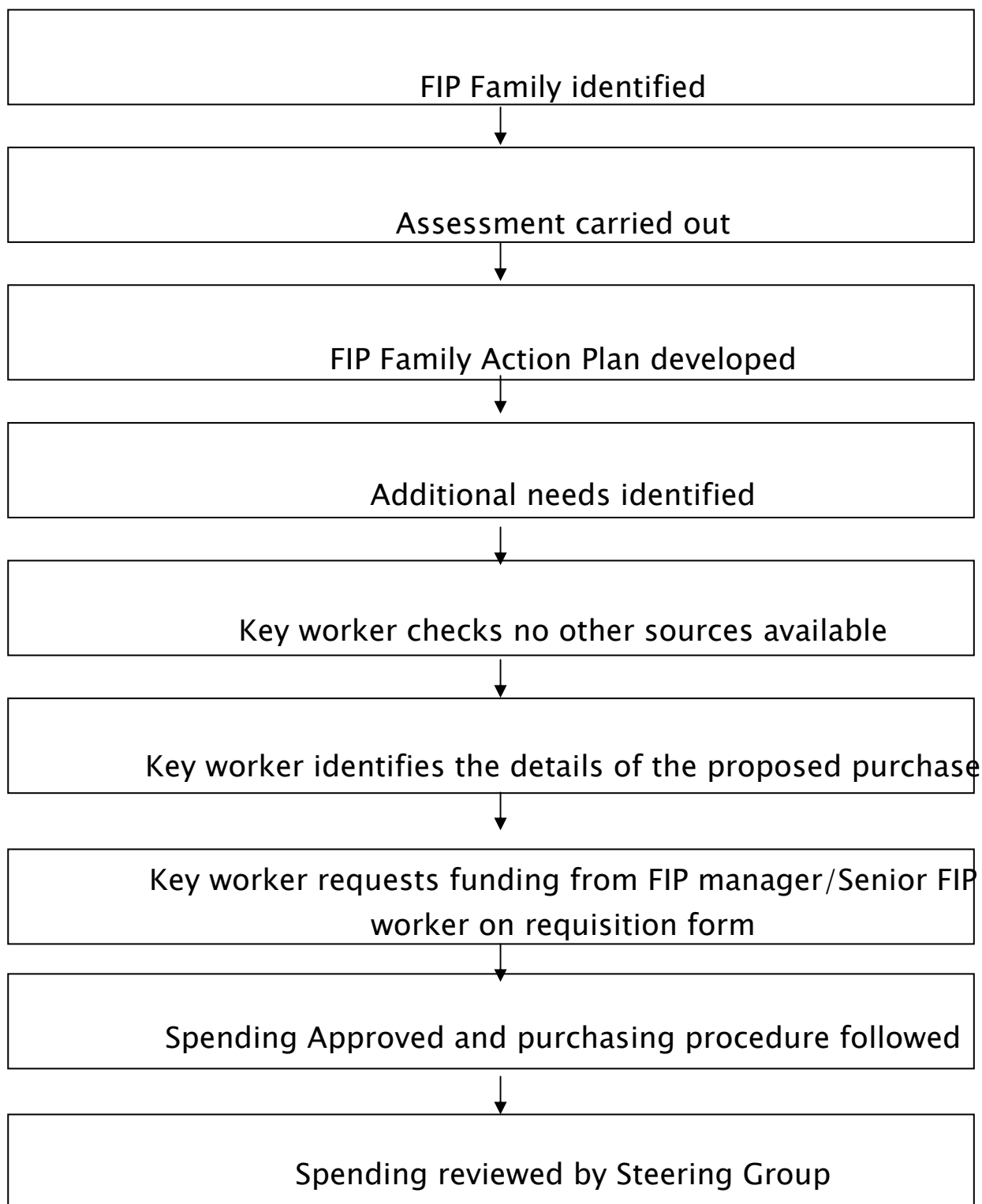
Trading Standards

Trading Standards Service
Wolverhampton City Council
Reception desk 14, 1st Floor
Civic Centre, St Peter's Square
Wolverhampton
WV1 1DA

For consumer advice phone: 08454 04 05 06
For all other contacts phone: 01902 551155
Fax: 01902 554329
Email: tradingstandards@wolverhampton.gov.uk

7. How to apply for Think Family FIP Funding

The Process



8. How to purchase services

The guiding principles for this process are that it should be

- Simple and easy to use
- Empowering to the service user
- Offer choice to the service user

The designated finance/admin officers are responsible for purchasing the items, or service, or arranging for it to be purchased.

The Key Worker will be responsible for

- Identifying what needs to be purchased with parent/carer/child, young person
- Identifying where it should be purchased from and supplying the details to the finance/admin officer
- Will be responsible for ensuring value for money is achieved e.g. shopping around and getting quotes where necessary
- Arranging for the parent/carer to sign the official receipt for any cash or goods
- Where goods are to be collected, arrange with family the collection.
- Identifying appropriately registered childcare services, and other services
- Ensure that services purchased for the child/young person or family are accessed and notify the finance/admin officer immediately if child/young person or family do not attend

The Key Worker will need to discuss the method of purchase with the finance/admin officer to ensure the key principles of simplicity, choice and empowerment are met

The Key Worker will be required to acknowledge that goods and services have been received by returning the delivery receipt form signed by parents/carers or young person by post or fax within 7 days of receipt of the goods or service. Invoices may be delayed if confirmation is not received. This may involve a home visit or a telephone

call by the Key Worker to check attendance at a service to confirm appropriate use of resource.

If you require further details, advice or guidance

Please contact Parenting Strategy Officer Jan Barlow 01902 551464

or FC and CO Steve Evans 01902 554113

(Wolverhampton would like to acknowledge the Blackpool and Coventry pilots for their support in developing this guidance)
