

About Family Action

Family Action has been a leading provider of services to disadvantaged and socially isolated families for 140 years. We work with over 45,000 families every year providing practical, emotional and financial support through over 100 services based in communities across England. We build on families' strengths, supporting them to fulfil their potential and make a positive contribution to their community. We use this experience to campaign for a society free from disadvantage and social isolation.

Family Action Central Office

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family action

Family
Support
Services

supporting families since 1869

Family Support Services

Improving the quality of relationships between parents and children and their wider kinship and community is integral to all our work. Strong relationships lie at the heart of stable and positive families and are central to maximising children's life chances. Family Action's Family Support Services meet a range of need through the provision of practical, financial, emotional and therapeutic support. We are committed to working with the whole family, bridging the often competing needs of individuals and generations. Working in this way enables us to provide tailored, coherent and individual responses to each family.

We work with families where they feel comfortable and safe – in their homes and in accessible community settings such as Children's Centres, schools and primary care centres. We believe that all families have strengths, no matter what difficulties they face, and we empower them to build on those strengths to develop their resilience and achieve their potential.

These approaches reflect the priorities of **Think Family: Improving the life chances of families at risk**, published by the Cabinet Office in January 2008, which emphasised the importance of working with the whole family, building on family strengths and tailoring support to family need.

Outcomes - Evaluation

We work to the five Every Child Matters outcomes and are committed to proving the effectiveness of our interventions. Many of our services use clinically-based assessment and evaluation tools, developed through our Building Bridges services, which have recently been independently evaluated.¹

¹ Morris J (2007) Family Action Building Bridges Model – Evaluation.



What Do Our Family Support Services Provide?

- Services are tailored to meet families' needs and circumstances.
- Our services are flexible and holistic.
- Consistent with safeguarding the interests of all family members, the starting point is always families' perceptions of the needs and issues they want to address.
- Managed by qualified and experienced staff, the services utilise trained Family Support Workers who are often recruited from the community being served.
- Support may be home-based or centre-based, and always combines practical, emotional and therapeutic elements.
- Our services improve family relationships by enabling parents, children and other family members to have a better understanding of each other's needs.
- Parents are supported to access and co-ordinate their relationships with other agencies and professionals.
- Services are task-centred and time-limited (typically 3-6 months).
- Trained volunteers play an active role in supporting families, adding considerable value to service delivery.
- All service users are actively encouraged to participate in decisions affecting their lives and the development of our services.

Who Do We Work With?

Our Family Support Services work with families with a wide variety of complex needs:

- **Building Bridges** services support families affected by parental mental health problems, filling the gap between adult and children's services provision.
- **Valuing Families** services provide support to families where parents have learning difficulties.
- **WellFamily** services provide holistic support to individuals and families linked to GP practices or other primary care settings.
- **Newpin** services provide intensive centre-based support to parents of children under five where there are problems with parent/child attachment.
- Family Support Services within Children's Centres operate in 15 local authorities.
- Our Assertive Outreach Services enable the most hard-to-reach families to access mainstream services.
- Family Support Services also work with families affected by domestic abuse, substance misuse problems and families where children have caring responsibilities.

For more details about Family Action's Family Support Services please contact:
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