

A quick guide to Focus Family

In Cumbria we are strengthening how we work with families who need extra help. That's because we want Cumbria to be a great place to be a child and grow up in. We'll do this by working closely in partnership with others and jointly tackling all the different needs that are faced by the family as a whole. We're calling this way of working the "Focus Family" approach.

A "family" is defined as a household and must meet at least 2 of the 6 criteria described overleaf.

Ethos of Focus Family

The ethos of Focus Family is to pull together existing support and address the needs of individuals through family centred work.

Family members are all influenced by, and have an influence on their environment. If they are to be supported into making significant and sustainable improvements all agencies need to recognise and respect the role of each other in this process.

Through using a strength based approach families will be challenged to address their barriers and supported to develop appropriate strategies to deal with them.

It is an expectation that LSCB guidelines will be followed and that any families not in receipt of a statutory assessment will have an Early Help Assessment.

How the referral process works:

- Discuss with family and complete an Early Help Assessment. If you are working at a statutory level please complete the Nomination and Consent forms.
- Send to Focus Family mailbox where the request is then checked. In order to ensure a smooth process please be clear about the unmet needs in the family.
- In order to enable additional support to be allocated the case is evaluated and if necessary it is discussed at regular meetings held in the locality. Not all cases will go to these meetings, some may be more straightforward and support can be secured through direct contact with partners.
- Confirmation of support is provided to the referrer.
- Outcomes are monitored.
- The family are considered to have made sustained and significant progress when outcomes have been met according to the Family Outcomes Plan.

For more detailed information or to make the nomination please contact the Focus Family Mailbox: **Focusfamily@cumbria.gov.uk**



A family must meet at least 2 of the 6 criteria below. For more detailed information please see cumbria.gov.uk/focusfamily

Domestic violence

- A young person or adult known to local services has experienced, is currently experiencing, is at risk of experiencing or is a perpetrator of domestic violence or abuse.
- OR:
- There has been a police call out for at least one domestic incident in the last 12 months.

Education

- In the last 12 months a child has:
- not attended school regularly;
 - has had a fixed or permanent exclusion;
 - is not on school roll;
 - is being educated in alternative provision;
 - a professional has concerns that child has attendance concerns equivalent to those above.

Crime

- In the last 12 months:
- A young person has committed a proven offence.
 - An adult or young person has received an anti-social behaviour intervention.
- OR:
- There is an adult prisoner with parenting responsibilities 12 months or less from release or has been released from prison and is currently subject to a licence or supervision in the community.
- OR:
- an adult with parenting responsibilities is serving a community order or suspended sentence.
 - The family at risk of becoming involved in crime.

Benefits/financial problems:

- An adult is:
- claiming out of work benefits;
 - claiming Universal Credit and subject to work related conditions.
- A young person is:
- Not in education, training or employment or is about to leave school has no planned way to continue education or training, or no plans to start work.
 - The family is at significant risk of financial exclusion eg unmanageable levels of debt.

Children who need help

- A child has been identified or assessed as needing early help.
- A child meets social care thresholds for support.
- Professionals nominate a child as having problems equivalent to the above.

Parents and children with a range of health problems

- This is a broad category focussing specifically on:
- Parents, including new mothers, and/or children with mental ill health, substance misuse concerns or unhealthy behaviours resulting in problems such as obesity/ malnutrition/ diabetes etc.

Outcomes are met when the family have evidenced significant and sustained progress according to the criteria in the Family Outcomes Plan.