

The Families Unit Norwich FIP



NORWICH
City Council



The
Families
Unit

Welcome to the families unit, Norwich City Council's family intervention project (FIP)

The families unit currently operates in the Greater Norwich area, to support families where there is at least one young person under the age of 18 living permanently at home, where there are significant risk factors threatening their tenancy or there are 'safeguarding' concerns within the family.

This booklet aims to give you and your family all the information you need while we are working with you. Everyone in your family is important to us.

- The families unit works in partnership with Norfolk County Council to deliver support to families under the national Troubled Families

agenda, which is known locally as Norfolk Early Help Family Focus. We also work with other partner agencies to share resources and ensure your family receives the most relevant service to meet their support needs.

Some families need help to:

- Keep their homes and understand their responsibilities as tenants.
- Settle into a community and live peacefully with their neighbours.

- Nurture their children, so they are able to reach their full potential and lead positive, rewarding lives.
- Move away from criminal and antisocial behaviour and be responsible members of their community.

None of this is easy, and it can only be achieved if families are willing to accept the support the families unit can offer.

Equality and diversity statement

We celebrate and welcome the fact that we live and work in a society of different cultures, faiths and backgrounds.

We believe that everyone has the right to be treated fairly, with respect for their individual strengths and needs, to ensure equality of opportunity for all.

We will challenge any form of discrimination that treats an individual unfairly.

Families unit staff

We have a manager, a senior practitioner and four FIP caseworkers, who are all supported by a business support officer. The families unit also has access to a youth mediation practitioner who is able to support young people between the ages of 14 and 18 who are at risk of homelessness.

Hours covered

You will be able to contact the project staff on their office telephones between **9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday**.

If your caseworker is out you can leave a message on their mail box and they will get back to you as soon as they can, although this may not be the same day.

If you need to speak to someone at the families unit urgently and your caseworker is not available then please ring **01603 213611** and we will try to help.

The caseworker may want to do some work with you in the evening or at the weekends if they feel that you and your family need the support. This will be pre-arranged and part of your support plan. If you need emergency assistance then please contact the emergency services on **999**.

If you have concerns about the safety or welfare of a child, young person, or adult you can contact social care on **0344 800 8020**.

Working with your family

- The families unit will work with your family to try to improve things that worry you or others. We will help you to live peacefully in your neighbourhood.
- The support we provide is intensive. We will offer you the level of support that your care plan requires.

- We will need lots of information about all the members of your family, so we can give you the best help possible. We will get this information from you and from other agencies working with your family.
- We will ask you to sign a consent form allowing us to share information about your family with other agencies who are working with you or could help your family. This will help us work well together to give you the support that you need.
- The families unit will ask you to sign an engagement contract outlining what we expect with regards to keeping appointments and engaging meaningfully with the service.
- Information about your family will be treated with respect and we will tell you when we need to share it.
- The families unit staff will not discuss your information with

- anyone else unless they are providing a service to your family.
- Information about your family may be shared within the families unit so that all members of staff can provide you with a service.
- The families unit can contact other agencies without your consent if they have evidence that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm, or to help prevent or detect a serious crime.

Your family support plan

- Once you agree to work with the families unit, we will arrange a meeting of all the different agencies that are working with your family. You will be invited to attend the meeting which will take place at a venue that is agreed by you.
- The meeting will put together a support plan which includes each member of your family. You will

be asked for your views. Plans cannot go ahead without the agreement of your family and all the agencies at the meeting.

- The plans will show which agencies will work with each family member, what they will do and for how long. You will get a copy of the plans.
- Your caseworker will go through your plans with you at least once a month, to check how things are going and what changes need to be made.
- You can ask for your support plans to be looked at and changed at any time.
- Your caseworker may arrange another meeting with your family and the agencies working with you if the support plan needs to be changed to reflect your progress.

- If social care and health services are supporting your family then a child protection or family support plan might already be in place. If so, your caseworker will join the multi-agency team working with your family and attend those meetings.
- The work completed by the caseworker with your family will be included in any social care or health plans that your family may have.
- Your caseworker may also put together separate support plans showing what work the families unit will be doing with your family.

Working together **We will be working very closely with you and your family, so we ask in return that you:**

- Make a commitment to working with us and complete the tasks agreed.
- Keep appointments that have been made for you and notify us in advance if you are unable to keep a pre arranged appointment.
- If your caseworker needs to postpone a pre arranged appointment they will notify you in advance.
- Treat all staff with respect as our staff will treat your family with respect.
- Refrain from smoking whilst we are visiting your home.
- Refrain from taking substances (drugs or alcohol) both before we visit your home, and during our visit, as this will affect your ability to work with us.

- Refrain from having visitors to the house whilst your caseworker is visiting you as this can be unhelpful.
- Remove dogs or other animals to a separate room or garden whilst your session is taking place.
- Attend all activities that you have agreed to take part in.
- Report any concerns you have to your caseworker.
- **We will not tolerate any form of verbal abuse or aggression from any member of your family or friends towards a member of our staff.**



Youth mediation practitioner

The aim of the service is to actively work with young people aged 14 -18 who are at risk of homelessness and require support. This includes repairing family relationships through practical and emotional support.

This service aims to build and enhance the capacity of young people to live as part of a family, within their wider community and to build independent living skills.

In addition we aim to improve young people's transition to independent living and to help move them on in a practical and planned way when appropriate.

Money

- Caseworkers will not handle your money.
- Caseworkers will help you with your applications but will not give you financial advice.

If you are in need of financial advice we will help you access this support from the appropriate services.

Health and safety

- If caseworkers are worried about health and safety in your property, then they will talk to you about this.

Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults

- Children need to be protected from physical, sexual and emotional harm or neglect.
- Adults also need protection from physical, sexual, emotional or financial abuse.

- The families unit will work with your family and other agencies to protect children, young people and adults from all forms of abuse.

- **If you have concerns about the safety or welfare of a child, young person, or vulnerable adult you can contact the local safeguarding team at Norfolk County Council on 0344 800 8020**

If it is a police, fire service or ambulance matter, please call **999** immediately or 101 if it's not an emergency.

- If we believe a child, young person or vulnerable adult in your family is at serious risk then we have a duty to pass this information on to the local safeguarding team.

Comments, compliments and complaints

- You can make a formal complaint about any part of the service you receive from the families unit through Norwich City Council's complaints procedure.
- You can speak to your caseworker, the senior practitioner or the manager to attempt to resolve the issue.
- If you are still unhappy you can put your complaint in writing and this will be responded to within 10 working days.
- All complaints will be acknowledged within 48 hours of receiving the complaint. All the compliments, comments and complaints we receive are recorded and included in our annual report.

In addition, any member of the public can complain to the Local Government Ombudsman. A leaflet called 'How to complain to your Local Government Ombudsman' is available directly from the customer contact centre at City Hall or alternatively you can request one by email info@norwich.gov.uk or telephone 0344 980 3333.

- Any comments or complaints you make to us will not affect the service you receive from us.
- The families unit welcomes comments and suggestions about the service. We will use your views to plan changes we make. We also encourage all our service users to get involved with our service user group. This helps us make decisions about how we develop our service to best meet the needs of all families referred to us.

The right to see your records

- The families unit will keep records of the work we do with your family.
- You have a right to see your records and would need to put your request in writing.
- Adults will not be able to see records of other adults in the family unless they have given their written consent.
- Children and young people have the right to see their own records.

- Parents can ask to see their child's records and can see them if it is in the child's best interests.
- If you disagree with something in your records you can discuss this with your caseworker.

- If you are still unhappy you can write your comments on the records or make a complaint.
- If you have any questions about your records or would like to see them please contact your caseworker in the first instance.



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If you would like this information in another language or format such as large print, CD, audio cassette or Braille please email info@norwich.gov.uk or call **0344 980 3333**