



Connecting Families Report for 2019 Delivering Better Outcomes

Quote from a parent:

"Last July our family was at breaking point. Our beautiful daughter was not the sweet little girl we once knew and we did not know what to do. We visited GP's, spoke to Samaritans, paid for private counselling, attended Off the Record courses and even reached out to other parents on parenting forums. We truly believed that we had done something desperately wrong and even went as far as questioning the way she was born.

Then an angel albeit a 6 foot tall angel entered our life. He was like a breath of fresh air and we finally felt someone was listening to us. Over the last five months he has supported our family especially our daughter to look for the positives and not to dwell in the past. He has had a positive impact on our whole family and we truly believe he has been sent to us for a reason. I am pleased to say that our daughter is flourishing she is working hard at school, remaining in class and staying away from trouble.

We have attended the parenting classes as a family and entered feeling failures as parents and we have left thinking we haven't done a bad job!

The ultimate compliment to your team is that Becky has decided that she wants to work for connecting families and give back what we have had.

Thank you for all your care and support, thank you for helping our family and finally thank you for helping our girl.

We would highly recommend The Connecting Families team you are all heroes.

We will forever be indebted to you"

National Audit Team said:

"Bath & North East Somerset continues to be one of our strongest performers in the country. There seems to be little doubt that you fulfil your commitment to achieve significant and sustained progress with 700 families with multiple, complex needs. We understand what a huge effort this represents and that it would not be possible without strong support from your partners and the fantastic work of frontline practitioners across B&NES. The outcomes of the Connecting Families team and your partnership have achieved with families are a great endorsement of the value of whole family working and early help for vulnerable families and should help all of us make the case for a continuation of this way of working"

Background and Introduction

Connecting Families (CF) is the name which B&NES Council has given to its core team leading the programme of Service transformation as part of Central Government's Troubled Family Programme (TFP). The team works with families who have the most complex needs and require intensive interventions to help them achieve positive outcomes for themselves. The keyworkers help change the lives of these vulnerable families, by using innovative approaches and providing outcome-focused strategies.

Our track record of helping the most 'troubled' families transform their life stories through intensive, flexible and personalised support packages, shows how empowering families creates real transformation, as families are the masters of their own destiny. The Connecting Families Team's innovative approach has enabled family members find employment, improve school attendance, maintain reductions in drug use and anti-social behaviour and see a decline in child protection concerns. Families are positive about their futures.

This directly supports the Council's strategic objective to "promote independence and positive lives for everyone" working with families that are the hardest to engage and/or living in the most deprived parts of B&NES.

The aim of the programme is to **turn the lives of families around** and make a positive difference to the families' progress by successfully addressing at least 2 of the following criteria:

- Parents and young people involved in crime or anti-social behaviour
- Children who have not been attending school regularly
- Children and young people who are at risk and need additional help
- Adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion and young people at risk of Worklessness and who are NEET (not in employment, education & training)
- Families affected by domestic violence and abuse
- Parents and children with a range of health problems

Ranked against
other LA's - 1st in
the South West
and 4th in England



How we work with our families – 5 Key Strategies

Rather than fit families into programmes, we create flexible packages of support **around the family**. Our keyworker system of practical and emotional support builds trust and helps us work towards agreed family goals. Experienced workers choose from a wide range of therapeutic and evidence based tools to deliver these key strategies:

1. Dedicated worker for families – each family has an allocated keyworker who considers the family as a whole. They use a problem-solving approach for all family members concerns. This worker works intensively with the family for an 8 to 12 month period and handover to a Family Matters community volunteer if the family require on-going support.

2. Practical hands on support – from helping the family to clear gardens to tidying the house and applying for funding to purchase essential items such as a washing machine, beds, etc. Working in partnership with the Welfare Support Team we can support the families who need the most help. The worker will work from the family home and regularly engage with the whole family to provide practical support. The workers use motivational interviewing and solution focus methods, to work alongside families and build up their trust.

Training and Development

In the Connecting Families Team we fully believe that to provide effective services to families we need to invest in staff training and development. In addition to peer support, managerial supervision and regular briefings, staff are supported to attend training to meet their development needs. These are identified through the “Performance Development Conversations” process. The pictures here show one of our Keyworkers, Paul Spreadbury, with staff from Southside Family Project (who arranged the training) being presented with a level 4 award for “working with children and families with complex needs”. The Awards were presented by Michael Eavis on the 21st November and for going the extra mile Paul gained an additional commendation for his work. **Congratulations Paul.**

Other staff completed training in Safeguarding; Supervision; Strategic Leadership and Management; Mediation; Reducing Parental Conflict; Motivational Interviewing and ACES.



3. Complete assessment – Taking into account the whole family, considering relationships between family members as well as assessing their needs and developing appropriate support packages. It identifies any gaps in support and engagement over a period of time and asks the family what will help them the most.

“This year saw a bumper crop of produce including marrows, onions, and beans. Families past and present really “dug in” and basked in the sunshine and tranquillity of the space. As well as the tasty veg we were lucky enough to give a home to a family of slow worms”



Bath City Farm Allotment

Connecting Families are still working in partnership with Bath City Farm, to have an allotment on the site. The Key Workers use this project to encourage family members they are working with to keep fit and enjoy the environment at the farm, feeding the animals etc. Family members help on the allotment, planting vegetables and herbs, keeping it clear of weeds and watering when needed. They enjoy harvesting the fruit and vegetables when ready and staff support families to cook new recipes using the fresh ingredients. This helps to promote a better understanding of food and diet.

Another aim of the project is to inspire families to spend more time outdoors. Some families, even though they live in close proximity of the Farm, had never previously visited it before. This work is great to improve mental health and well being, as well as helping family members to access this local provision, with a long term aim that they will use this facility on their own after our work has finished. The team will be hosting various activities on the plot that coincide with popular events arranged by Bath City Farm.

4. Whole Family Approach & Support – work with all members of the family, reviewed via team around the family meetings, especially involving dads. This identifies needs, which may have previously stopped the family engaging with support or making progress, and identifies any other support requirements necessary for the family. Liaising with all agencies to ensure a high standard of service and support to the family.

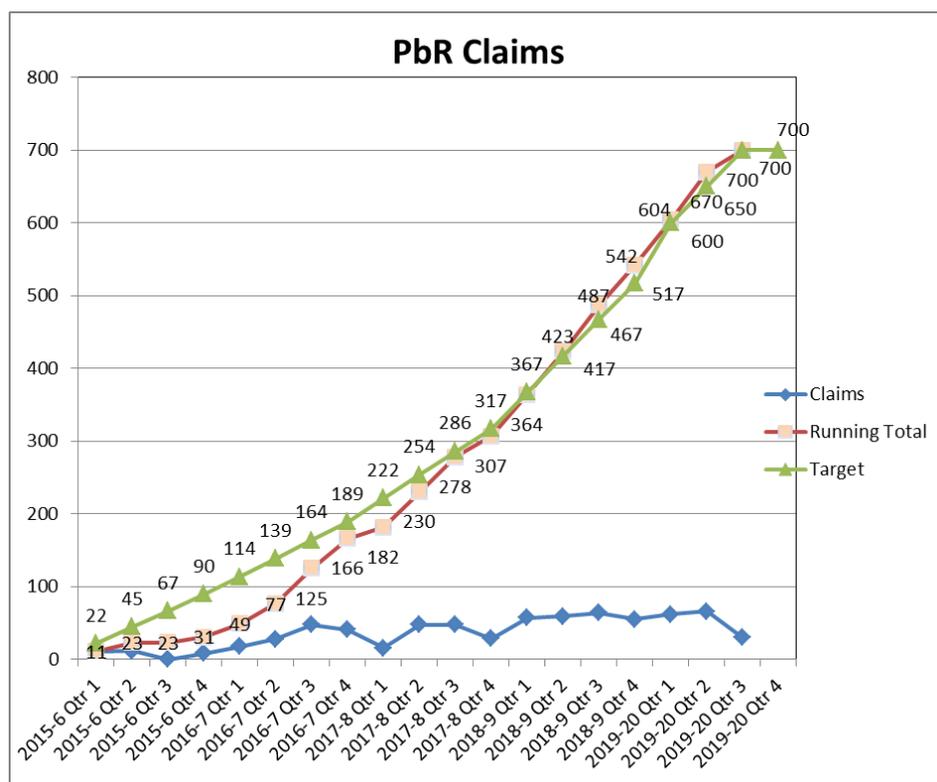
5. Agreed Outcome Plan – All the agencies working with the family will share one vision for that family. They will have been involved with deciding the goals for change with them, which is then written in the plan, focussing on positive outcomes, in both short and long term.

These outcomes are linked to the Troubled Family Programmes guidance and the desired outcomes for the Council to keep children safe of health, which is written up into the Bath and North East Somerset Troubled Family Outcomes Plan or TFOP. This can be found on the Connecting Families Webpage:

<http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/children-young-people-and-families/connecting-families>

How Success is measured / Impact and Results to date

Each family is measured against set outcomes and if sustained and significant progress has been made, a payment by result (PbR) can be claimed.



The target for our 5 year programme is 700 claims and this was reached in November 2019, ahead of schedule. This was due to the momentum over the last 18 months, with 50+ claims being made every quarter, as shown by the blue line in the above graph.

There was a spot check by the Troubled Families Unit (TFU) in July 2019. This is the validation process to ensure compliancy with the programme’s financial framework and the feedback was very positive.

There is a table on page 12 which shows the performance of Bath & North East Somerset compared with the other Local Authorities in England.

A typical case study

Miss A contacted Children's Social Care requesting support after the school submitted a referral following the sudden death of her ex-partner, the father of her son, B whom he had lived with. The Son had to come and live with her for the first time ever, which she found difficult as she had not had much of a relationship with him. She loves having B in her care but felt she needs support with parenting to be the best mother she can be, mental health, substance misuse issues and housing situation. When B moved in, he had limited clothing, holes in his shoes and was very sad. Miss A received £190 and needed financial support to provide B with basic items.

The referral did not meet the threshold for social care, so it was taken to the Early Help Allocation Panel and Connecting Families were able to offer intensive support. A keyworker met the family to build a relationship with both mum and son. They completed a multi-agency assessment to identify their needs and shape their family outcome plan. After several months of intense work, the following outcomes were achieved:

Miss A is a recovering Class A substance misuser and is vulnerable to relapse, she was referred and supported to attend DHI for weekly relapse prevention work and is abstinent from substance misuse. She had received an eviction notice due to high rent arrears. A Discretionary Housing application was made to help pay off the rent arrears which prevented the family from being evicted.

She was at risk of financial exclusion with several bad debts. A successful application was made to Welfare Support to assist paying council tax and bailiff fees and an affordable repayment schedule was set up. Advice on budgeting was provided by Citizens Advice. She is now in control of her debts and maintaining the repayment schedule.

The Employment Adviser has assisted with work/training options, updated a CV and supported an application to PIP which despite being declined originally, she successfully appealed. Miss A has decided to enrol on a college course studying Health and Social Care as she is really interested in this sector.

Miss A had a warrant out for her arrest due to theft. She was supported to hand herself into the Police and initially received a 6-month probation order and a fine. Due to illness and anxiety, she was unable to comply with the order, so it was replaced with a 12-month suspended sentence. There have been no further crimes committed or any on-going issues with regards to crime or Anti-Social Behaviour. She had mental health needs and was struggling with her emotional well-being, she re-engaged with her GP and a package of support was put in place. This included Talking Therapies sessions, 1-1 counselling and anti-depressants which have made a real difference.

B's School attendance was poor, he was struggling academically and grieving and was misusing MDMA/cannabis. The school and Key worker put in place a package of support including, anger management sessions, a referral to CAMHS and 1-1 interventions around bereavement from the Connecting Families key worker. B engaged well in these sessions, his attendance improved, and he started to advance academically.

He has engaged well with Project 28 and is now clean from Cannabis and no longer using MDMA. He reports that it has been difficult but realises that it was holding him back at school and costing a lot of money. He feels he will be able to maintain his abstinence and will continue to engage with Project 28. B has been nominated for a client achievement award through DHI and attended an event where he received an award.

The house was unkempt, in need of essential furniture and redecoration. Funding from St Johns, Monica Trust, Welfare Support and Connecting Families enabled the family to redecorate the house under the guidance of the Key worker. Flooring and carpets were replaced, and a table and chairs purchased for the dining room giving the family a nice clean environment to eat and spend time together. B's bedroom was decorated, and a new bed and wardrobe purchased giving him a space where he feels comfortable and can relax. Miss A was supported in advice around cleaning and maintenance routines to ensure the house was kept tidy and clean.

The family are now closed to following a successful completion of the plan. They are very grateful of the support received and feel able to be self-sufficient and to cope with day to day life. B is doing well at school and reports that he has come to terms with the death of his father. His relationship with his mother is good and he feels supported by her.

Children affected by Parental Imprisonment (CAPI) Lead Champion

Every Year there are an estimated 200,000 children who will see a parent sent to prison in England and Wales (i-Hop 2017—now NICCO). Research has shown that there are strong links between parental offending and the poor outcomes this has on their children, including risk of mental health problems, poor school attendance, and the likelihood of being involved in criminal activity themselves later in life (Gallager,B,2012).

In Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES), the Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership, has prioritises this, recognising the impact on parental offending on children. As a result we have recruited a pool of CAPI Champions within the Council from the Connecting Families Team, Children's Centres and Youth Offending Service as well as from partner agencies, such as Project 28, Health Visitors and Educational establishments. In 2019 a CAPI workshop was held to raise awareness of this issue. As a result additional front line staff from B&NES Children's Social Care, Mentoring Plus and Youth Connect South West expressed an interest, attended a one day Hidden Sentence Course at HMP Guys March and became CAPI Champions for their team/Service/Agency.

Joan Cooper's role as the Lead CAPI Champion for Connecting Families is to be a first point of call for colleagues in the team to share information, resources, raise awareness and give support. This work is structured around the National Information Centre on Children of Offenders (NICCO) Quality Statements to help Services in B&NES improve their work with offender's families. As CAPI Lead, I chair three meetings per year to share good practice, resources and information and offer colleagues who are CAPI Champion's the opportunity to come together and undertake reflective peer supervision. We are currently gathering data on the CAPI work and monitoring outcomes for children and their families.

If you are interested in becoming a CAPI Champion for your team, Service or Agency, please contact me by email: Joan_Cooper@bathnes.gov.uk

Talking Teens Parenting Programme

Family Links Talking Teens is a 4 week parenting programme specifically aimed at parents of teenagers. The Programme is designed to provide parents with the understanding, skills and ability to lead emotionally healthy lives, build resilience, empathy, self-esteem and support positive relationships.

This is the second Talking Teens Course that Connecting Families have facilitated. After the success of the first one it was decided to run a pilot programme at the same time as the Parenting Course ,for the teenagers of the parents attending. This was co-facilitated with the Youth Offending Service.

Some parents have younger children and child care issues, especially those couples attending the course. A children's group was also offered to the course participants. This provided indoor and outdoor positive activities.

There were 12 parents/carers and 8 teenagers on the two courses. The teenage workshop was designed to mirror the content of the parenting course, but delivered in a format suitable for teenagers to allow equal learning for both parties, as well as strengthening their relationship, and develop an awareness of the challenges that they both face within their household and externally.

Overall the programme was a success against the set outcomes. The parents fed back that they found it an "Excellent course that lots of parents would benefit from" and all attending parents stated they would recommend the course to other parents.

The teenagers thoroughly enjoyed it too they fed back that they wished the course was longer than 4 weeks and that they "felt more able to talk about things with the parents in the future and finally felt more understood". Overall it was a great success and therefore we will be running another dual course starting in February 2020.

Positive Activities



The Wheels Project is aimed at 14-18-year olds, specifically those who are struggling with their academic studies or have low attendance levels. This year we were able to identify 7 young people to undertake their Bronze Award, designed to engage students in

activities around motor vehicle repair, maintenance and driver safety. The young people completed the Community Vehicle Programme. The aim of this programme is to acquire a suitable vehicle which the students can



prepare to MOT standard before gifting it at the end of the programme to a local Community group. This year the chosen community group was Keynsham and Chew Valley Food Bank, as many of them have used this service the young people were pleased to be able to help. This work has been funded by St Johns Trust and The Medlock charitable Trust. Having successfully completed this section they then began preparing for the Bristol School Karting Championship (BSKC), this entailed travelling to Team Sport at Avonmouth where they began weekly practices on an indoor go-karting circuit to improve their track performance. They were entered as two teams into the semi-finals. For most of the young people

this was their first experience of a competitive team sport and some found this difficult to manage.

One young person said that **“the course has given me a break from the struggles in my life, it has given me confidence and self-esteem”**.

Having competed in the semi-finals, one of the teams made it through to the finals at Thruxton Race Circuit, where they would race on an outdoor 900m national circuit in all weather and track conditions. The other unsuccessful team continued to support their peers and independently took on the role of mentors for the others, giving them practical driving tips and encouragement from the side line, making it a real team activity.



All their hard work and practice paid off, as they came 12th out of 15 teams. One young person said **“The wheels project has been great for me and I have really enjoyed every minute of it. It has helped me to gain confidence, I have made some good friends, it has really helped me decide what I want to do when I leave school and given me knowledge and experience. It has helped with my behaviour and anger also, it has really helped talking to people and learning different ways to deal with things. I really enjoyed working on the community vehicle and gained a lot of knowledge from this. All the staff at wheels and connecting families have been great and have really helped me. I really enjoyed taking part in the karting too, it teaches us how to work as a team and stick together, we all encouraged each other. If I was able to take part in the wheels project again, I would definitely take up the opportunity. It has really helped me, and I am sure that it will help me in the future also with mechanics”**.

The Wheels project celebrated its 40th year in 2019 and were delighted to receive His Royal Highness, the Duke of Kent KG who met staff, Trustees, students, referral agents and recipients of our Community Vehicle Programme. Two participants, Toby and Tilley and Tracey Bidgood (Connecting Families Team Lead) are pictured here speaking with the Duke. They were delighted to meet him.



Summer Activity Day

On the 6th August the team held a Summer Activity Day at Riverside Youth Hub and in the open space at Kensington Meadows. This activity was funded by Bath Scape .

Ten families (9 adults and 20 children) had an opportunity to try some thing different and fun. They all enjoyed the outdoor space and joined in Bush craft sessions making fires, bread, fairy wings, bubbles, wood models and exploring the area. They had the opportunity to take part in fishing and kayaking on the river . Sports activities were available. for those who didn't want to venture to close to the water.



Some of the families attended the Easter activity day and really enjoyed that so were inspired to attend this event too. Other families who had not been before needed a little extra support to attend due to feeling anxious about meeting new people and managing their child's behaviour in groups. However with support from keyworkers and the warm up / getting to know you activities they soon settled and built positive relationships with those they did not know.

Riverside Youth Hub, although being on the edge of the city, is great for families as it feels like its out of town. Most families were dependant on transport to attend, so when things got a little difficult rather than going home (which many have reported they usually would if there child was unable to regulate their behaviour) they were supported to stayed and enjoyed the whole day.

Families rated the day 10/10. They appreciated the support from staff to attend and said they would have been sat inside the house all day if they had not been there.

The day worked really well, families had access to indoor space for time out / quiet space, facilities for lunch and transport arranged. This removed the barriers which often stop families from attending events like this. They all enjoyed it without concern over financial constraints or fear of not being supported with their own needs or that of their children.

Outputs / Outcomes achieved.

All family members increased their self-esteem and confidence and by being outside in the fresh air and in touch with nature their mental health and wellbeing improved.

All Family members were able to prove they had raised their aspirations by suggesting future activities e.g. more days out.

All attendees increased their activity levels by taking part in bush craft sport kayaking and fishing.

The event helped staff to build positive relationship with families, who in turn learnt new skills and were introduced to a green spaces the local area that they had not used before and were inspired to do more things like this again.

All family members used good communication skills to engage with staff and made choices about what activities they wanted to do.

Troubled Families Employment Adviser's Case Studies

Jan Capel is seconded to the Connecting Families Team from the Department of Work and Pensions as the Troubled Families Employment Adviser (TFEA) to encourage families to get back into work or move closer to a work agenda.

Some work related news

A young woman has found herself a new job. She was struggling with the previous job and wanted support to secure a new job as she wasn't happy in her work. I supported her with a CV and she attended Bath Job Fair. She has now secured herself a new role. She is feeling happy with her new role and may have fallen out of work without the support.

A young male has gone "on the books" with his employer and this was previously treated as self-employed earnings. He has increased his hours and his partner has also found herself part time work. I have supported them both with CV's and their benefits. Their prospects are looking up now they are both in paid employment.

On an initial visit, I spotted a tribunal hearing letter with the client's paperwork. It was a Universal Credit hearing scheduled for the very next day. The client was adamant that it wasn't anything to do with money, but I was able to explain that it could potentially mean a lot of money and to reassure her of the processes involved. I was able to rearrange an appointment to be able to meet her in Bristol the next day to support her at the tribunal hearing. There was also a little confusion over a "stalled" mandatory reconsideration for her Personal Independence Payment which I was able to help resolve which meant an additional back payment of over £2,000. The client has now been assigned a Connecting Families keyworker but already is more financially stable and getting what she is entitled to

Other examples of sustained improvement that Jan has supported

One parent is self-employed but struggling to manage his business – he needs to take on additional help, and wanted some business advice – I sent some information and links on the apprenticeship program. The responded with this "I think this might be the answer to my business problems". Hopefully this will enable him to extend his business and become more financially viable and enable him to come off of Universal Credit.

I supported two of our young people Tilly and Toby with their CV's and they both secured work within 3 weeks. Toby is doing a Christmas temporary job at Sports Direct and Tilly has managed to get a full time job at "Creams" a new cafe that's just been built in town.

Another of our Mum's had a real fear of Universal Credit and should have been receiving this benefit, but was not. She was slipping further and further in debt and was struggling to make ends meet. She said she just felt like she was stuck on a hamster wheel and didn't know how to get off it.

I have now supported her to make a claim to Universal Credit and to access the benefits she is entitled to for herself and her daughter. She has care responsibilities and suffers with a number of conditions that are greatly impacted by stress and anxiety and am happy that she is now feeling a lot more able to manage. She has recently started a new part time job.



Welfare Support Team

The Welfare Support Team have expanded and are now being managed as part of Customer Services. The team enjoyed working with Sharon and Angela and managing them, we will continue to work in partnership. How to contact them, if you need support with debt, white goods etc;

By phone, by calling the Welfare Support Team on: **01225 477 277**

By text: 07560 263550 (for non-emergency only) **By email:** welfare_support@bathnes.gov.uk

This service is normally available **Monday to Thursday -9.00 to 4.30 & Fridays - 9.00 to 4.00.**

Reducing Parental Conflict Programme

Vision: To reduce parental conflict in B&NES and create happier homes for children

The Reducing Parental Conflict Programme is supported and part funded by the DWP, with this funding we have been able to train 100 staff and employ a Family Mediation worker for 2 years to sit alongside the strategic work provided by the Head of Children and Families Prevention Services and the Connecting Families Team Lead.



For a programme like this to really make a difference for children, Keyworkers and Family Support staff in all sorts of organisations need to be more aware of the impact of the inter-parental relationship on children, and how they can help. Strengthening this understanding will support them to enable families in taking steps towards making their homes a calmer place for children to grow up in.

The programme was launched at a large multi-agency event in July in Keynsham where the idea was developed with great enthusiasm by all. The action plan was written with those present to give the work a timeframe and structure and people signed up to the multi-agency practitioner and managers training that they would have access to in a few months' time.

Alongside the planning for the event and arranging the training, a new post was created and advertised. Within 3 months we had appointed a new full time worker Chris Martin,

In November we ran a train the trainer programme, and are developing a pack of information/toolkit to support teachers and other staff with interventions at levels 2 & 3 to help them deliver this work locally. In the New Year, we will roll out more training and access to the e-learning package, which we will take to agencies including schools so they can access it easily.

As Patrick Myers, Senior Ambassador from the DWP Reducing Parental Conflict Programme, stated "It's all about behaviour in school and how by taking relational approaches rather than disciplinary ones we get better outcomes for children and the school".

However when staff cannot deliver the work themselves or when it needs more of a specialist approach they can refer to Chris Martin by completing the new referral form and healthy relationship checklist. This will be available on the Teams website—See Page 16 for the link

Chris has just begun his mediation work, with referrals rolling in but it's too early to state the outcomes achieved.

He can be contacted via email on Christopher_Martin@bathnes.gov.uk or by phone on 01225 396679 or 07980 998982



Troubled Families Programme

Each quarter the Troubled Families Unit produces a Report outlining the National picture for the programme. The report includes data on all 140 of the Authorities. This includes the number of attachments achieved – these are the families who are involved in the programme and the Payment by Results claims made when an outcome has been achieved.

Below are extracts from the last Payment by Result claims table for claims made up to September 2019, showing Authorities in order in terms of the % of their target achieved. Three Authorities had achieved their target by this date.

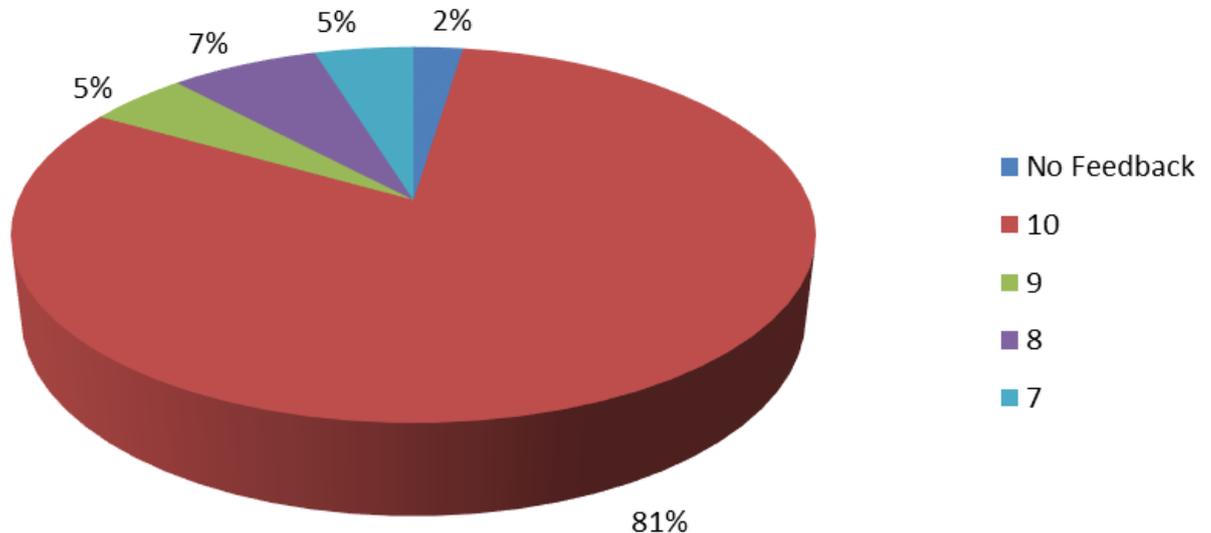
B&NES was 4th in the country out of the 140 Local Authorities in England and the highest ranked Authority in the South West.

National Position	Local Authority	Maximum funded families up to 2020	Total PbR Claims up to end of September 2019	PbR Claims as a % of the Target
1	Cumbria	3,380	3,380	100.00
2	Walsall	2,830	2,830	100.00
3	Richmond upon Thames	650	650	100.00
4	Bath and North East Somerset	700	670	95.71
5	West Sussex	3,940	3,724	94.52
6	Hartlepool	1,000	913	91.30
7	Milton Keynes	1,600	1,457	91.06
8	Bristol*	4,100	3,714	90.59
9	Kent*	9,200	8,243	89.60
10	Somerset	3,000	2,682	89.40
Other South West Region Authorities				
11	BCP	2,216	1,967	88.76
16	Devon	4,280	3,607	84.28
17	Gloucestershire	2,980	2,489	83.52
19	Plymouth	2,380	1,984	83.36
26	Dorset	1,874	1,518	81.00
30	Wiltshire	1,990	1,577	79.25
33	Cornwall	4,010	3,158	78.75
34	Swindon	1,310	1,029	78.55
43	Torbay	1,180	907	76.86
66	South Gloucestershire	1,050	735	70.00
67	North Somerset	1,010	706	69.90

The Programme has been extended for another year, with the funding secured for 2020 / 2021. Following the recent Elections, the Ministers are in place, Robert Jenrick is The Secretary of State and Luke Hall continues to be responsible for the day to day business of the Troubled Families programme.

And families tell us...

Family feedback - Open cases Keyworker satisfaction scores (out of 10)



Please can you tell us what went well? What you most enjoyed?

“My sons having someone to talk to and understand and feel listened to. The activities gave my boys a sense of achievement and the time out of the house helps. Also something for them to come back and talk to me about, i.e. the wheels project, football, camping, the gym and others. At these places they are making friends.”

“Help to keep on track and achieve goals, keeping in touch, not feeling like I am trying to juggle so many things and not coping.”

“Our keyworker is a really nice person to talk to. He helped to sort out a lot of problems, listened to my husband who needed someone to talk over problems and helped him at a very difficult time.”

What do you think might have happened if you had never signed up to work with me as part of the Connecting Families Team?

“I would have felt more stressed and alone”

“Thank you for everything , without your help I would not be where I am today... you gave me the gift of freedom and independence , for that I will be fore ever grateful xx you are one in a million ... from the bottom of my heart, Thank you xx.”

Early Help

Connecting Families is only one of many targeted Early Help Services in B&NES.

The Vision for Early Help is : “ that all children, young people and families have access to well co-ordinated, good quality and timely Early Help when required so needs can be identified and addressed to promote fulfilling family lives”

Early Help means providing effective support to children, young people and families as soon as needs start to be identified, and to bring about change. Professionals will work with the whole family to try to improve things for everyone. Early Help may occur at any point when needs arise, from pregnancy through to the teenage years and at any stage in adulthood.

How does the Early Help work in B&NES: Someone who is already known to you and your family, such as a teacher or health visitor, might suggest that you would benefit from Early Help. You could also speak to a professional to ask them to refer you and your family for more help and support. With your consent they will complete a referral with you.

Your referral could go directly to a single service if it is clear which service could help, if not, an Early Help Assessment (formally known as CAF) could be completed to help decide which service or services could help. If you need any help or guidance with the assessment contact the **Integrated Working Team at IWT@bathnes.gov.uk or 01225 395021.** or a **Request for Support** form could go to Social Care. Social Care may then pass the referral to the Early Help Allocation Panel (EHAP) which is Chaired by Paula Bromley, Head of Children and Families Prevention Services. For further guidance see www.online-procedures.co.uk/swcpp or discuss concerns with the Council’s Social Care Duty team on 01225 396312 or 01225 396313 to gain guidance on the most appropriate course of action.

We may go back to the services who referred you to ask for more information or check what information we already have before the referral is passed on to EHAP. The panel members will do their best to match your needs, working in partnership with other chosen service(s) to ensure that when you’re ready, **the right help, by the right service is put into place.**

You and your family will be invited/welcome to a meeting with the different people who could help. This could include workers from schools, health visiting, Youth Connect, Children Centres etc. This meeting is called a **TAF (Team Around the Family) or TAC (Team Around the Child).**

During this meeting we will work with you and your family to decide what support you need and what is available. Following an assessment of needs a plan will be agreed saying who is going to do what and by when.

A Lead Professional will be decided. This person will be your main point of contact, they will keep you informed, listen to your views and support you during the work with you.

The Review. This is when everyone will come back together and see how well the plan is working to discuss with you what is going well and what else needs to change and co-ordinate the services around you. These reviews will continue until all the work is completed.

The outcomes are shared with all involved and **celebrated with you and your family.**

What Early Help is available?

Information about other local services available through the Hub can be found through the Online Family Support information (1 Big Database) see: www.bathnes1bd.org.uk

Early Help Targeted Support - if you know which service could help refer directly to them. Details of early help services can be found on the Early Help App (download for free from the Apple or Android store by searching “B&NES Early Help” or go to www.bathnes.gov.uk/earlyhelpapp

In Conclusion

We have had a great year and believe that we have made a real difference to families in B&NES. Our success is based on:-

- A **family based approach** which includes practical, hands on support
- Provision of an **intensive, flexible and personalised** family support package
- **Empowering families** to change - seeing families as the motor of their own destiny.
- A **persistent** approach backed up by sanctions with **outcomes agreed with the family**
- **Dedicated keyworkers** who never give up, whilst families are open to the team
- **Partnership-working with volunteers** to provide on-going support to families as the intensive CFT intervention comes to an end.

For further information the Connecting Families Business Plan is available on request and other information can be found on the Council's webpage:

<http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/children-young-people-and-families/connecting-families>

Paula Bromley, Connecting Families Strategic Lead, and Head of Children and Families Prevention Services said: "I would like to thank the Connecting Families Team for their hard work and enthusiasm, they always go the extra mile and put families first which is why the teams outcomes are so fantastic".

This year the team not only had the highest number of Payment by Result Claims for the Troubled Families Programme in the South West, a feat achieved for the 3rd year running, they also reached the programmes overall target four months ahead of schedule. Well done Connecting Families.

Due to the success and my own personal contribution to children, young people and families I was lucky enough to be invited to a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace on the 21st May. The sun shone and I had a lovely day and even got to see several members of the Royal party, as well as enjoying a lovely cream tea. What an amazing opportunity. Thank you to the Troubled Families Unit for arranging this.

Of course the Connecting Families Team cannot do this on their own. It is by working in partnership with the families themselves and other Services especially the Children Centre Services (that I manage too) that makes the difference. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our partners within the Council and the Voluntary Sector for their on-going contributions to children, young people and families in Bath and North East Somerset, helping us to gain these positive outcomes.

It is only by working together that we can keep children safe and healthy and achieve our aim to enable families with multiple complex needs to receive the services they need to change and support them to achieve resilience, health and wellbeing within their communities.



Connecting Families Team



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To make a referral to the Connecting Families Team please complete our referral form which can be found on the website,.