

Belfast Outcomes Group, working closely with the four Locality Planning Groups covering the Belfast area has devised a phased roll out plan for the establishment of the Family Support Hub network required to meet the needs of families seeking support. BHSCT acts as the delivery agent for the Outcomes Group in this process. Staff from Gateway, CAMHS and Health Visiting services make key contributions to the Trusts engagement, which is facilitated and coordinated by BHSCT's Early Intervention Support Team.

To make sense of existing networks and service delivery patterns, hubs across the City are of varying size and configurations. Five hub areas in North, South, East and West have to date already engaged in a hub establishment process. This involves broad based community engagement, Trust led workshops covering key areas such as effective safeguarding supports and the focus of the Family Support hub model on early intervention services to families.

These processes are underpinned by the provision of bespoke training for community and voluntary sector partners, delivered on key subjects such as risk assessment, dealing with neglect and enhanced designated officer training, delivered by the Trusts training team, partly funded by the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland.

At this point processes have been run for the appointment of five lead bodies tasked with providing key coordination, communication and facilitation roles to their respective hubs. Ligoniel Improvement Association, Whiterock Children's Centre, NI Alternatives, LORAG and Greater Shankill Partnership board fulfil this key role. Three of these hub areas have begun taking referrals over the summer months with two more going live in September.

Tommy Boyle who is leading the BHSCT contribution to the establishment of the hub network in Belfast, comments. "I continue to be impressed by the willingness and commitment of family support service providers across the community and voluntary sector in engaging with the BHSCT staff facilitating the hub establishment processes. I feel it shows the shared commitment of Community Statutory and Voluntary sector partners to ensuring that families, who may find they are in need of support, can access the many high quality services available, in the most coordinated, accessible and timely manner possible."

While a busy schedule of work to complete the roll out of this planned network lies ahead over the rest of the current year, Belfast Outcomes Group has been heartened by the enthusiasm with which organisations localities not yet covered by this network await a chance to develop the networked working opportunities that hubs offer to benefit families.