The Creating Strong Communities model has been established as our ‘framework for practice’ and has been implemented to change and support the way local practitioners and partners in North East Lincolnshire work together to safeguard vulnerable children and to prevent problems in families from escalating.

The approach combines the four key established tools of Signs of Safety, Restorative Practice, Outcomes Based Accountability and Family Group Conferencing. As you may be aware for the first 15 months of implementation we have hosted an independent research team, commissioned via the Department of Education from York Consulting. This team have been undertaking analysis of data, facilitating workshops, surveys, interviews and establishing case studies to understand fully the impact and potential scalability of our frame work for practice. The results of the independent evaluation of the first phases of this approach are very encouraging, with clear and demonstrable evidence that things are moving in the right direction with evidence of impact.

It was pleasing to read some of the case studies within the report, which includes a focus on the development of Family Hubs, which has seen the offer for families extended. The implementation of the frame work for practice within these hubs, including implementation of inter-disciplinary teams has been very positive, with good examples of embedding practice in this way. The report also states that during the period of review:

- The rate of referrals to Child in Need had fallen by 4%
- Children on a Child Protection plan by 23%
- The report also details that referrals to social care fell by 25%
- Re-referrals down to 11% respectively.

Another element of the review was on the implementation of Family Group conferencing (FGC). This is a strengths based model, where the whole family of the child and professional practitioners closely work together to make a decision that best meets the needs of the child. Families eligible to receive FGC included those cases:

- Where the CiN plan is not having any impact and consideration is being given to stepping up to Child Protection. This is to offer the family the last opportunity to come together to safeguard their children and access extra family support
- Where a strategy meeting has been convened and consideration is being given to the children being placed on a Child Protection (CP) plan, these cases will have previously been on a plan and safety has been achieved and they have come off their plan. FGC would work with the family to ensure safety and prevent the need for a CP plan
- Where there is a PLO (Public Law Outline) issue with children on a CP plan and likelihood that the child might be removed from the family home

The feedback from families who have engaged in the process has been largely positive:

“*The meeting was lovely, done very nicely, I felt at ease.*”

“*It has helped the family realise what’s what. The questions made it clear we had to sort things out and commit or else!*”

“The meeting is for everyone, so you don’t feel individual pressure, it’s like a weight being taken off your shoulders.”

“It’s a good thing they do FGC, it has really helped us a lot.”

Continued over…
A cost benefit analysis of FGC implementation has been conducted using a Fiscal Return on Investment (FROI) methodology. This involved calculating the cost of FGC support and setting it against the observed benefits; essentially adverse outcomes avoided e.g., avoid becoming LAC. Benefits were then divided by cost to show the return on investment.

Information has been collected relating to the outcomes of 20 families who have had an FGC as part of the Creating Strong Communities programme. The sample of families consists of our ten case studies and ten additional cases provided by the FGC team. In all cases, the initial outcomes have been positive.

There was also some evidence to suggest that besides this being a strength based model for working with families in need, it is also an effective use of resources. FGC support is shown to the cost of £536, a benefit of £9,776 and a return on investment of 18.2. Non FGC support has a cost of £11,350, a benefit of £4,089 and a return on investment of 0.4.

“...The FGC lead made the family feel at ease. It was beneficial for mother to meet the lead FGC on a previous day; to discuss what the meeting entails and the questions likely to asked.”

“So far the family’s FGC plan is being adhered to and appears to be working as this is my first experience of FGC I can only say it is positive.”

“FGC gave me another vision about how to work with the families and their children which was very helpful. The result of this case was fantastic, it gave a chance to the child to have a normal and safe future.”

Learning every day

Details relating to lessons learned from Creating Strong Communities programme implementation are:

- **Integrated approach**: the integrated nature of the four project elements has had a reinforcing effect. It has not been “another project”, but a systems change journey that has generated its own momentum. While this was initially difficult to project as a concept, but is now easier to deliver as a way of working.

- **Scale of change**: an early criticism of the project was that too many changes were being made too quickly. This was necessary to set the foundation of a new framework and has been very successful in establishing a critical mass of confidence and competence in the new way of working.

- **Demonstrating that it works**: the success of Family Group Conferencing, Signs of Safety and Restorative Practice has been the fact that staff who use it can see that it works. This has applied particularly to FGC, where some staff were converted by the evidence of successful family outcomes. Whole systems change cannot be seen to be optional.

- **Doing it right**: the audit framework, recently introduced, has been very successful in identifying both achievements and areas of improvement.

- **Don’t complicate it**: while OBA is fully embedded at a senior management and leadership level, its percolation through the workforce has been more problematic. It is not rocket science but can appear to be so. This can be avoided by focussing on the mantra – how much? – how well? – what difference? – rather than the mechanics.

- **Managing momentum**: workforce training has been central to the change programme. The strategy has been largely to train trainers/manager and cascade down. As part of this process, Champions Networks have been established to support and drive momentum. They are doing well in the current circumstances but will only be effective long term if given sufficient resource and authority.

- **We cannot do this alone**: emerging from OBA is the central tenant that area wide objectives are achieved by all partners; not any one. Some progress has been made to roll elements out to schools, care homes, police etc. While there have been some notable successes, it has, overall, proved to be challenging. There is scope for extending the Champions model to operate in this arena and also to promote, by demonstrating, that it works.

Much progress made, really pleasing, yet as part of the continuous improvement journey we are on, we have more to do to challenge, support and enable if we are to deliver the necessary conditions to improve outcomes and offer the best opportunities for children and families in North East Lincolnshire.

While the DfE funding for the creating strong communities model ends at the end of March 17, the model (signs of safety, family group conferencing, restorative practice and outcomes based accountability) will remain our framework for practice both now and in the future.
In our last 0-19 update we told you about the analysis that had taken place and that the programme team and work-streams had been established. Here’s a bit more information about what they have been doing and what we have planned over the next few months.

**Model Development**
As part of the development of the model for children and family work, the main group discussing model development is the Practitioner’s Reference Group - a group of front line staff from various disciplines from across council’s children’s services who have been meeting fortnightly. They’ve been discussing what the future model might look like, its functions and how the new model would feel to staff, partners, children and families. A Cabinet report was developed for the January meeting based on the contributions of this group so that they can agree the characteristics of our future way of working, to deliver outcomes for families, children and young people.

The report is available here

Watch this space for further updates on the development of the new model.

**East Marsh and West Marsh Prototypes**
Humberside Police have recently created two new Early Action policing teams in East and West Marshes, offering an exciting new opportunity to think about how services can work in communities to prevent problems before they take hold. Effective prevention work requires close working arrangements among agencies so NELC are leading a process of integration, bringing local professionals into greater contact with one another. A strategic group has been set up to oversee the local integration and to think about what else could be done to stimulate a greater focus on prevention and early intervention. We are pleased to welcome a range of partners to the board, including representatives from the clinical commissioning group, public health, housing, police, NSPCC, local voluntary sector organisations and local communities. A workshop is planned for partners, to agree the principles of the work.

**Single Assessment and Cluster Single Assessment Meetings**
Two workshops were held in December for staff from NELC, schools and partners to review the Single Assessment (SA) and Cluster Single Assessment Meeting (CSAM) processes. The invitation to challenge, support and develop this work was open with all schools and partners invited to participate. The sessions were lively, energetic and well attended. Here is a snippet of the feedback we got from the sessions:

What’s working well?
- The SA provides a clear framework for having difficult conversations
- Signs of safety offers a good way of looking at the whole family unit
- The approach improves integrated working across all partners
- CSAMs enable relationship building, collective working and offer peer support
- CSAMs enable better sharing of information so that all partners can understand the bigger picture

**What needs to improve?**
- More training is needed for partners and staff on signs of safety and the use of the SA
- Support to some partners to give confidence in using the process
- Understanding of the purpose of SA and understanding that it is not a referral tool
- CSAM timing, length and frequency needs reviewing – too many makes it difficult to attend
- Communication among LA and partners outside CSAM meetings needs to improve
- Not all cases at CSAM need to be at CSAM – need to use a triage system to decide on the cases that need discussion

Since December we have been reviewing all the feedback and are in the process of updating our processes starting with the FFAP (see article below) which will undertake the triage function and simplify processes for staff and partners. We will keep you updated as our processes develop further based on your feedback.

**The New Families First Access Point (FFAP)**
We have very exciting news in respect of developments of our front door arrangements. We are developing and further investing in the already well established ‘front door’ for children and family services. This has been known as the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in North East Lincolnshire.

Over the last year we have been trialing the Families First Access Point, focusing on early help and co-located with the MASH. We are now establishing six full time early help posts within a new, combined model to be called the Families First Access Point (FFAP). Colleagues from the old FFAP and MASH have come together as of January 9 2017 and become the FFAP (Families First Access Point). The joining of resources is designed to strengthen our front door offer and ensure that children and families are receiving the right support at the right time.

Continued over...
There will be a period of transition during March while we firm up our processes and staffing but otherwise any calls for Children’s Safeguarding, Early Help or Information Advice and Guidance should be via the number 01472 326292 or e-mail FFAP@nelincs.gcsx.gov.uk.

**Domestic Abuse Task and Finish Group**
The One System group, the 0-19 task and finish group and the Ofsted thematic inspection preparation group will merge into one group focussed on the prevention of and the local response to domestic abuse (bringing activity into one single plan). The first work of the group has included the local launch of ‘White Ribbon’, a national awareness campaign encouraging people to never commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women. It works in tandem with the United Nations international day for the elimination of violence against women.

**Relationships and Resilience Framework**
Teenage pregnancy is seen as a key indicator of poor relationships and low self-esteem and confidence, and recent work to refocus on this area has led to the creation of this framework, because it is believed that resilience and relationships are also key to improving other areas of concern for young people of which the broader 0-19 programme is seeking to address.

The framework pulls together interventions supporting young people and also to understand, promote and share intelligence about this shared offer to develop prevention and early help. It brings together 14 projects with a focus on meeting the needs of young people, largely through prevention or early intervention. The aim is to get in early with children and young people to ensure positive outcomes, to build confidence and raise aspirations to prevent teen pregnancy, poor sexual health, poor emotional health and the take up of drugs and substances amongst other things.

The emphasis will be on ‘I can’, to empower children and young people to become the adults they want to be, having the opportunity to reach their potential. The new framework launched on Tuesday 6 February.

**Have your say on the 0-19 Programme**
Council staff can now access a group on the intranet called “0-19 Programme Feedback”. You can join this group to have a say, raise questions or discuss the programme and how children’s services might look in future. For access, log into the intranet, click groups, scroll to ‘0-19 Programme Feedback’ and click ‘request access’. If you have any trouble finding or accessing the group or if you are a partner who wishes to ask a question contact: 0–19programme@nelincs.gov.uk.

**We have recently refreshed our Prevention and Early Help Strategy which you can find on the council website here**

**Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF)**
The Creating Strong Communities Programme brought the need for a different way of working with children and families.

To support this, a Children’s Workforce Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) has been developed to define the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for anyone who works, volunteers or leads work with children, young people and families. This is a comprehensive and innovative piece of work, which is available for viewing and use across the borough.

The PCF has been designed to improve the quality of prevention and early help work, while promoting and encouraging effective individual and professional practice among agencies. It also enables the building of respectful and collaborative relationships within North East Lincolnshire’s community and within its multi-agency workforce.

The PCF can be accessed here.

You can start to use the PCF now to help identify strengths and areas for development in one to one or team discussions. If by using the PCF you identify any common areas for development please contact Deborah.haines@nelincs.gov.uk to help inform our learning and development offer.
Digital North East Lincolnshire

Digital Development and Delivery Board
The board is working across all key commissioning activities and none more so than the 0-19 programme.

The organisation Futuregov started to work with us last month to help us to understand the council’s role in enabling a digital ‘Place’, ‘Communities’ and ‘Workforce’. In 0-19 a key focus for their work will be to test out the thinking re the new operating model and how digital can enable and enhance it. Already under consideration are a virtual school nurse, virtual family hub and e-redbook.

Futuregov bring an entirely independent perspective to help us to develop a digital roadmap and understand where we need to focus our efforts and resources to best effect. The key to the success of this work is to engage staff and partners so if you are asked to participate in any focus groups or workshops, please make it a priority and get involved.

#DigitalNEL - Save the Date! - March 8th
Digital NEL is our first Digital Event for all NELC staff.
The day will provide an opportunity to see how digital technology can support service areas in their day to day work. Colleagues from Families First and Family Hubs supported a recent consultation session which aimed to find out what they would like to see at the event that could practically support what they do. The session was certainly thought provoking and certainly told us that we had a way to go. On the day we hope to share our digital journey so far with as many staff as possible and showcase some amazing staff. You can join the intranet group ‘Digital Event’ to find how you can get involved.

Benefits Cap – working in partnership for better outcomes
Recent changes to the benefit system mean that some families will see a significant reduction in their income - some in excess of £100 per week.

Working in partnership, the customer management team, family hub advisors and community learning services are working with the first group of families that are affected. Many of these families were already known to the hubs so by working together a better programme of support could be planned and now, via appointment, an advisor will help families to plan their finances more effectively including the use of online resources. Additionally, as the families are from workless households all will be offered a careers appointment with advisors at the family hubs. It is hoped that this integrated approach (combining the support of our staff and online solutions) will prevent families entering crisis.

Neglect Tool
Neglect is a LSCB priority. The effective use of the Neglect Assessment Tool by agencies involved with the child and family is essential to establish a baseline assessment of neglect and measure progress and change over time.

We must get the right kind of help to neglected children as early as we can - the longer they suffer neglect without support, the more corrosive the harm they suffer.

Research shows that professionals often struggle with child neglect and don’t always know what to do when they have concerns. They often overestimate the parents’ capacity of care for their child and the child’s resilience to harm. Helping professionals to objectively measure neglect and identify areas where parents need to improve their care will result in better outcomes for children. The Graded Care profile (Neglect Tool), provides an objective framework for evaluating a family’s strengths and weakness, it aims to ensure that parents get the support and help they need at the right time.

The LSCB has committed to promote the use of the local neglect tool at every stage across the threshold of need. We will monitor its use and promote it as an aid to assess and review circumstances to measure change and improvement. An assessment of the use of the neglect tool by agencies in NEL has highlighted the following benefits:

• It clearly evidences where the need/s is, and how we can easily measure impact and look at timely and appropriate support with the main issues highlighted.

• It has been used to step cases up to social care when needed and also used to show parents how much progress they are making. It has also helped workers prioritise their workloads and given them confidence by using it or working in partnership with other agencies to complete one.

• Feedback from staff indicates it is a useful tool to give a baseline to start and review progress.

• It is a useful tool in identifying neglect issues to support families, and family support programmes, evidence for example outcomes/step up.

• Evidence when a bespoke assessment is used before any intervention there is an improvement in the quality of work as the intervention is more effectively targeted to meet a family’s needs.

Continued over…
The LSCB are now adopting the Graded Care Profile 2. Local findings support national findings from evaluation and testing of Graded Care Profile (GCP) and Graded Care Profile V2:

- GCP helped professionals identify risks of child neglect and potential harm more effectively and promoted positive change for families.
- Useful features included the scoring process which helped to quantify neglect and make neglect more visible to professionals and to parents.
- The GCP encouraged practitioners to focus on the child's experience rather than focusing on the adults' needs which helped in the assessment of care.

There will be a roll out programme to accredit practitioners in the use of the GCPv2 from January 2017 to replace the NEL Assessment tool for Neglect. Until staff are accredited in GCPv2 the original tool must be used. Further information about this will be available soon. Find more details on the Neglect Tool and Neglect Strategy here.

LSCB procedure update:

LSCB Procedure update

The NEL LSCB Safeguarding procedures were refreshed on the 24 November.

It was a recommendation from the LSCB Leadership Board that a definition of the various types of sexual abuse feature in the safeguarding newsletter to support practitioners when undertaking assessments where there may be features of sexual harm.

Types of Sexual Abuse

Child Sexual Abuse

A child is sexually abused when they are forced or persuaded to take part in sexual activities. This doesn't have to be physical contact and it can happen online. Sometimes the child won't understand that what's happening to them is abuse. They may not even understand that it's wrong.

Interfamilial Sexual Abuse

Interfamilial sexual abuse means sexual abuse that occurs within the family. In this form of abuse, a family member involves a child in (or exposes a child to) sexual behaviours or activities. The “family member” may not be a blood relative, but could be someone who is considered “part of the family,” such as a godparent or very close friend.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse. Children in exploitative situations and relationships receive something such as gifts, money or affection as a result of performing sexual activities or others performing sexual activities on them. It can occur through the use of technology without the child’s immediate recognition. In all cases, those exploiting the child have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources.

Harmful Sexualised Behaviour

Harmful sexual behaviour involves one or more children engaging in or being engaged by others in any kind of sexual activity or sexual act that is inappropriate for their age, understanding and/or stage of development. Sexualised behaviours that are harmful are considered to fall outside of what would be deemed to be safe and or healthy for the young person or child/ren involved.

Learning from Safeguarding Audits

The LSCB are publishing one page reports on key learning from inter-agency safeguarding audits to inform practice around factors that minimise problematic practice and those which maximise good practice.

The reports can be found here: [http://nelsafeguardingchildrenboard.co.uk/performance/](http://nelsafeguardingchildrenboard.co.uk/performance/)

Continued over...
Modern day slavery

Do you know what modern day slavery is? Would you recognise the signs?

Types of modern day slavery can vary, from sexual exploitation and domestic servitude, to forced labour and criminal exploitation, with each type having different signs and implications. One in four victims of slavery is a child, and one third are male. Many forms of slavery involve restricted freedoms and verbal or physical threats of violence, with victims receiving little or no pay.

Forms of modern day slavery include:
- Sexual exploitation
- Domestic servitude (with restricted freedom)
- Forced labour
- Criminal exploitation
- Other forms include: organ removal, forced begging, marriage or benefit fraud, illegal adoption

Victims can be any age or gender, ethnicity or nationality, although common signs include:
- A lack of legal documents, or use of false or forged identity documents
- Strange injuries or signs of injury, with vague explanations
- Malnourished or unkempt appearance
- Withdrawn or timid behaviour – unable to answer questions or perhaps under the controlling influence of others
- Fear of the authorities

Businesses can be perpetrators of slavery, using forced labour to operate. Signs that a business might be using forced labour include:

Use of children for work
Quiet, reclusive behaviour of employees. Perhaps unkempt appearance.

If you suspect a case of modern day slavery, whether involving an individual, child or adult, a group of people or a business, you should call the police, or the modern day slavery helpline on 0800 0121 700

UNICEF BABY FRIENDLY ACCREDITATION AWARD

UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) is a best practice award based on a set of interlinking evidence-based standards for Maternity, Health Visiting, Neonatal and Children’s Centres/Family Hubs services. The accreditation programme, which developed from a Global World Health Organization/UNICEF BFI initiative, is now also recommended by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) and the UK Government’s Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN). It is an integral part of the Healthy Child Programme.

In line with prevention and early intervention, the accreditation programme aims to improve the standards of support, information and care provided to pregnant women, new mothers and their babies, across hospital and community services. The health outcomes, wellbeing and development of all babies is central to UNICEF BFI standards. The standards support services to:

- Improve the care and support that pregnant women, new mothers and their families receive
- Promote and Support mothers/parents to build strong relationships/early attachments with their babies
- Support mothers/parents to safely and responsively feed and care for their babies/ies.
- Support services to embed evidence-based practice to improve short and long-term health outcomes; by protecting, promoting, and supporting breastfeeding.
- Ensure parents, who have chosen to formula feed babies, are supported to ensure this is done safely and responsively and to support mother and family relationships no matter how the baby is fed.

ACHIEVING THE FULL AWARD

To achieve the full BFI accreditation award, services must fully implement all the UNICEF BFI evidence based standards and undergo several stages of rigorous external assessment.

North and North East Lincolnshire services have taken a joint approach to achieving these standards. UNICEF assessors visited both areas last week to undertake external assessment of: Health Visiting and Maternity services, including: Family Hubs/Children’s Centres, Infant Feeding/Peer support and Neonatal Services across the localities.

Continued over...
RESULT
Stage three accreditation was achieved by the Health Visiting Services in both North and North East Lincolnshire including, Family Hubs /Children’s Centres, Infant Feeding/Peer support.

The accreditation will also be awarded to Maternity services in the coming months following completion of two recommendations.

Once agreed by The UNICEF BFI designation committee this will mean that the all services working towards UNICEF BFI accreditation across both localities will be awarded full UNICEF BFI status.

Overall, UNICEF BFI assessors feedback was very positive. The Assistant Director of the programme commended all services for the innovative, extensive and challenging approach taken to achieving this award. They commented that extensive partnership integrated work to embed and monitor the required standards and to improve service provision for women and their families in this locality had been exemplary.

The prevention and early intervention work that is also done within the infant feeding /UNICEF BFI agenda with families around attachment, responsive parenting, responsive feeding and impact on infant brain development was also commended, as were The Peer support services (including the volunteers).

NEXT STEPS
Service standards must be maintained and are reassessed by UNICEF within a two year period, services can then progress to Advanced or even Beacon status.

Emotional Health and Well being Training

The Council’s Lifestyle Services team are offering training to increase knowledge of mental health and emotional wellbeing to all across the borough.

The team have been commissioned as part of the Future in Mind programme – a national ambition to transform the design and delivery of services for children and young people with mental health needs – offering free places to those who work with children and young people.

When working with children and young people, it's also important to look after your own mental health, and that of your colleagues and staff. Our adult focussed courses will give you the skills and knowledge to do this.

To find out more about the courses and available dates contact Natalie Justice on 01472 323837 or email natalie.justice@nelincs.gov.uk or visit http://nelsafeguardingchildrenboard.co.uk/future-in-mind-training/

Food for Fitness

A good food culture helps children develop social skills and reinforces positive behaviour. 90% of head teachers agree that eating healthy, nutritious food improves attainment and behaviour.

Food For Fitness have been delivering informative, accurate and up to date healthy eating sessions in schools and academies for ten years. The sessions are cross-curricular covering Mathematics (timings, weighing and measuring), English (reading and following instructions), Geography (understanding where food comes from) They also encourage working as a team, good food hygiene and health and safety.

The team can offer sessions or training in Food Safety, Nutrition, Healthy Foods and Special Diets, Food Allergens and Food in the Curriculum.

To find about dates, courses and booking a session contact Natalie Justice on 01472 323837 or email natalie.justice@nelincs.gov.uk