

Families First a model of whole family interventions

Current estimates are that between 1-14 and 1-10 children go home to a parent with a serious drug or alcohol problem.

Families First is a fully integrated team in Middlesbrough, where there are problematic substance misuse issues. The service has developed a model of work with the whole family; children, parents and carers Framework for the interventions are based on three key elements

- Intensive family interventions - time limited family interventions working with families in crisis where there are serious child protection concerns directly related to substance misuse. Solution focussed /motivational based on individuals values and strengths
- Adult social work interventions –Assessments for Residential and Community based Rehab programmes. Carers support and group interventions.
- Primary Pregnancy Protocol – early intervention assessment and planning for pregnant mums in treatment

The service aims to

- keep children with their families where it is safe and possible to do so
- help families during times of crisis
- support parents/carers to recognise their drug issues and help them to change

Most families are referred because mainstream services have reached an impasse or found it impossible to engage them effectively. Team is made up of adult and children's workers who work across professional boundaries, core principles are based on: -

- seeing families for the problems they face rather than the problems they cause
- focus on peoples strengths and values, not their difficulties and deficits
- support every member of the family that wants to be involved
- offer practical 'hands- on' support when needed – extended hours and weekends
- communicate openly and transparently
- recognise never to late to act preventively

Outcomes

“Thank you so much.....I will always be grateful to you all for giving me the best opportunity to parent my son “ mother

- 77% of children maintained in families
- 90% of families who remain together maintained progress of exceeded goals at one year follow up
- significant reduction in family conflict
- significant reduction of drug and alcohol use

Families First is an innovative and ground breaking service that goes to the heart of the drug strategy in reaching and supporting families at risk: -

“ where parental substance misuse existswe (must) provide intensive and integrated support for families to improve parenting skills, reduce risk factors for children, support families to stay together and break the cycle of problems being transferred between generations” Drugs :protecting families and communities 2008 drug strategyHM Government
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