

Stronger Families consultants a 1 minute guide for managers

Stronger Families Consultants

The Stronger Families programme operates with a team of Stronger Families consultants placed in key agencies with the aim of modelling the *Think Family* approach, which we know is the most effective way of improving outcomes for families with complex needs. They are well informed about the programme, have access to an up to date database so can easily check which families are included and who else is working with the family. They are all trained to a minimum of Level 4 (working with parents) and meet regularly with each other for networking, group supervision and professional development. Through their excellent networks they are able to fast track families to access the most appropriate advice as well as joint working across traditional boundaries when required. They can access the Stronger Families Opportunities Fund to secure additional resources for families and have an excellent track record in tackling debt, and removing barriers to employment.

The **SF consultants** are a peripatetic resource and their placements will be reviewed at regular intervals. Their ultimate aim is to support the transformation of your service to be working in a whole family way.

SF consultants have these main areas of responsibility:

- **Consultation:** offering advice and guidance to colleagues in their own and other agencies/organisations in respect of work with complex families in tackling new or challenging situations, without the need to refer on to another service.
- **Coaching:** supporting other workers to develop a strategy to address or manage a particular issue; for example, through a planned series of meetings/conversations to build confidence in tackling new or challenging situations and support a successful intervention where their agency is the Lead Professional.
- **Co-working:** for example joint visits, chairing review meetings, co- working with a colleague (for example to deliver a specific targeted intervention). This can also build workers' confidence in tackling new areas of work or overcoming resistance and building motivation with individuals who they are finding hard to engage.
- **Case work supervision:** SF consultants can complement the role of the team manager by offering case work supervision.

SF consultants also take a lead role in their agency/organisation for supporting successful performance of the Stronger Families Programme. This is done through:

1. **Identifying** all eligible families known to the service;
2. Ensuring that eligible families have an **offer of early help** and they are encouraged to take this up;
3. Ensuring that all *priority* eligible families where your service is the lead agency is **receiving a Stronger Families approach** i.e.

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- A whole family assessment is in place;
 - The support plan addresses the **whole family's needs** and is focussed on the key results required by the programme.
 - **One lead worker** is recognised by the family and other professionals;
 - The objectives in the family's plan mirror the **Stronger Families Outcomes Plan**.
 - Practical hands on support combined with-a **persistent, assertive** and **challenging approach** is helping to **secure positive engagement**
4. Ensuring **evidence of positive progress** is provided to the Stronger Families Programme team as required and in a timely fashion in the shape of progress certificates and case studies which evidence best practice.
 5. Championing Think Family approaches through **consultation, coaching and co-working**:

Other roles which **SF consultants** have undertaken successfully are:

- Liaising with the SF programme to provide management information and qualitative material e.g. case studies
- Piloting new ways of working e.g. STEP UP programme; FGC, Safer Healthier Homes, Step In Team, joint working with another service, etc.
- Leading team development sessions on aspects of whole family working
- Delivering briefings for other partners.