



Helping families with complex needs to get ahead in life

Cerys Williams (pictured left), Family Support Co-ordinator for the Surrey Family Support programme, shares her experience of helping a family in crisis.

Could you give an example of a family you have helped?

The challenge was to provide a multi-agency response to the rapidly changing needs of a family who were in the process of becoming a family again after some years of trauma and separation.

The family was made up of a single mother and three children under twelve. Mother was engaging very well with her social worker and was happy to receive any further support available.

The children had settled back down within the family home. However, their teachers had serious concerns over the children's behaviour within school and the police had been called a number of times to the home.

How did you help them?

As a Family Support Co-ordinator I was able to visit the family two to three times a week to help to embed new parenting techniques. This was supported by separate visits to the children to create opportunities for exploring their feelings of anger and frustration, which, once identified, enabled me to sign post the family to specialist support agencies to continue with this work.

A multi-agency team around the family was created to meet the needs identified by the Co-ordinator and the Social worker. This involved representatives from mental health providers, school, Citizen's Advice Bureau and a domestic abuse worker.

What difference did it make to their lives?

The agencies working together meant information was shared in a useful and timely way, and this collaboration

allowed progress to be made. For instance, the school was made aware of a history of abuse and were able to change their approach to both the children and the mother.

What have you learnt from dealing with them?

Families' circumstances can change quickly, for better or for worse, and it is only by close working together that appropriate support can be given; support which can adapt as the needs change. This is important as sometimes agencies underestimate the nature and speed of change within families.

How can people find out more?

Contact me on cerys.williams@reigate-banstead.gov.uk or visit the [Family Support Programme](#) website.

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Cerys Williams, Family
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