

# FAMILY TOOLBOX INFORMATION PACK

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**FOR PROSPECTIVE PROVIDERS**

FAMILY TOOLBOX IS A PROJECT FUNDED BY:





# WHAT’S IN THIS DOCUMENT?

## PART 1 INTRODUCING THE FAMILY TOOLBOX ALLIANCE

The Vision, Purpose and Objectives of the Family Toolbox	6
What success looks like	13
The Values of the Family Toolbox	14
How to bid	17

## PART 2 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

How we got here and why we’re doing it	19
Alliance Agreements	23
Connecting with wider Wirral work	27
Family Toolbox brand, Membership Mark and Digital Hub	29

### Two things you need to know before you get into this document:

The word **Alliance** comes up a lot in this document as it’s the new contracting model that will be used. In short, an Alliance is a group of providers (plus the council) who choose to work with one another and are contracted together to work towards a common goal. There is no ‘lead’ provider in an Alliance. You can read more about Alliancing in part 2 of this document. We will use the word ‘Alliance’ or ‘Family Toolbox Provider Group’ when

talking about the successful group of providers and their responsibilities.

**Backbone functions** are specific tasks and activities that happen behind the scenes to keep everything on track. This is a catch-all phrase for things that the Alliance needs to make sure are sorted - there are a few examples of the kinds of tasks required later on.



## **PART 1**

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# **INTRODUCING FAMILY TOOLBOX**

# INTRODUCING FAMILY TOOLBOX THE VISION FOR FAMILIES IN WIRRAL



## We want children growing up in Wirral to thrive.

Over the last few years, we have been listening very closely to our parents, carers and children as they tell us what family life in Wirral is like: where they feel stretched, overwhelmed or isolated; what's great; but also, what's missing for them. We found out more about those times they need a bit more support, and how they want to feel when they're getting that extra help. Their stories told us about the key areas we need to strengthen and helped us as a team shape our priorities - putting a big focus on how support feels for each person, making access to support joined-up and making sure it's 'ready to go' as and when families need it. At every step, this new way of working has been designed with and for Wirral's families – and we're so grateful for those who took the time to share their stories and ideas.

This new approach will be known as Family Toolbox, and instead of trying to 'fix' families it'll focus on giving them tools to find their

own answers. We want families to hold the power: what do they want to change? What families have told us will shape all our ways of working – even in more professional settings – we want to move away from traditional sector language, in fact jargon is banned – let's keep things simple and consistent; let's use the language of real families.

We all have our part to play for Wirral's families, and, while the Council will continue to directly offer vital social care services, families have told us that earliest help needs to feel different from us as a Council for them to engage sooner and more fully. In Wirral, our vibrant and skilled community sector is already doing so much to support families – and this gives us an opportunity to let you lead the way. We want to hear from groups of forward-thinking and family-focused organisations who would like to team up with us to lead this new way of working to

help families in Wirral be the best they can be. We're looking for organisations that are anchored in local communities, who feel like 'trusted friends' to families, and who know that no-one or nothing is the finished article.

This pack outlines the ambitions, features, and structure of Family Toolbox, and explains more about how organisations like yours can get involved in the proposed Alliance. This is no 'flash in the pan' – this new way of working and this creative contracting model will be set in motion the way we want things to feel for the long-term - so this document also talks through the values, behaviours and principles that will guide us in coming years, giving us a great starting point to make this work.

So, thank you for taking the time to read this information pack. I hope that when you read it you feel as excited for the future of Early Help as I do, I look forward to your application to be part of the core team leading it.

**Elizabeth Hartley**  
Assistant Director: Early Help  
& Prevention

# INTRODUCING FAMILY TOOLBOX THE VISION FOR FAMILIES IN WIRRAL

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**The financial envelope for this tender is £670,000 per annum**

(This figure is based on 2021/22 budgets and is subject to change at the discretion of WMBC)



**The contract term is five years plus option to extend for two periods of two years each (5+2+2)**

# THE VISION FOR THE FAMILY TOOLBOX ALLIANCE



Family Toolbox will be there for:

- All families in Wirral who want some free information, resources, ideas or support to help their family be the best it can be.
- Any families who aren't sure exactly what they need but are beginning to feel overwhelmed.
- Families facing specific challenges and looking for additional support.

Family Toolbox resources and experiences will be available to all and should be:

**Free from criteria and thresholds.** We want to remove thresholds for families to allow families to access support as and when they feel they need, rather than when they meet a criteria.

**Free from burdensome assessments.** We know that families are the ones who know best about what they need. We'll listen to parents and carers and be led by them and their strengths, rather than by paperwork that can pigeon-hole families based on 'needs'.

**Free from referrals.** We want to publicly promote experiences and support through the Family Toolbox brand so that families can just get in touch directly - no one needs to 'refer' them. However, any professional can make an introduction if that makes things easier.

## FAMILY TOOLBOX SHOULD ENCOURAGE FAMILIES TO THINK: COULD I...

Use my own resources?

Find new information?

Talk to someone who can help?

Try out an activity that will help?

Share my learning with others?

# THE PURPOSE OF THE FAMILY TOOLBOX ALLIANCE

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We are seeking innovative and enthusiastic providers with a variety of expertise, skills and ideas from across the community to form the Family Toolbox Provider Group. Once in place, the group will work as one, sharing decisions and responsibility for planning, delivering and transforming support for families across Wirral.

## **So, what's the ask?**

The Family Toolbox Alliance will have responsibility for the following core strands of work:



# THE PURPOSE OF THE FAMILY TOOLBOX ALLIANCE



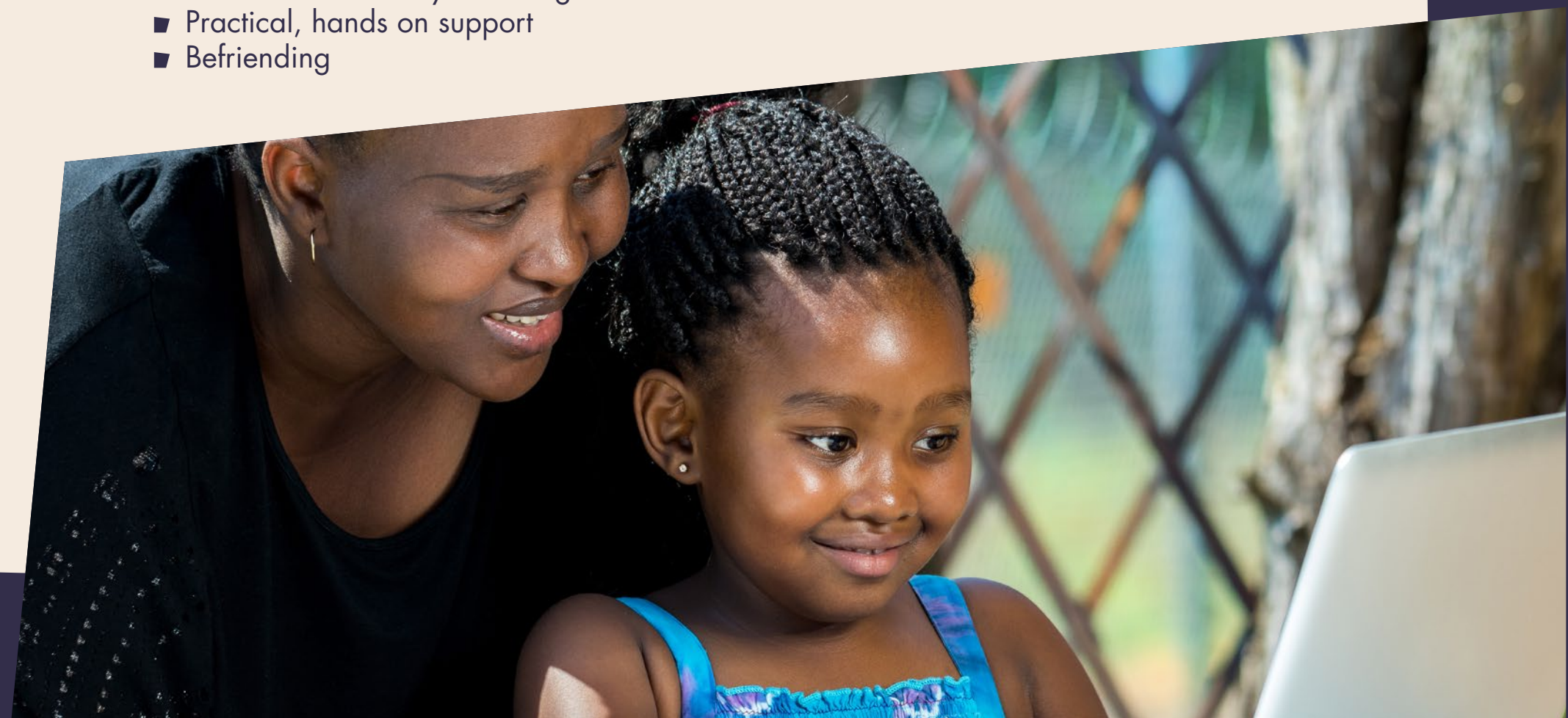
## ■ Delivery of a variety of supportive experiences which Wirral families have told us would help them to thrive

The Family Toolbox Alliance will make sure the following are **available to all** families:

- Online resources and information
- People who families can go to for help
- In-person resources, information and activities that benefit families
- Grassroots activities and local hubs, clubs and spaces
- People who can share information, communicate with and connect families

The Family Toolbox Alliance will make sure the following types of supportive experiences\* are available **for families who'd like a bit of extra support**:

- Peer-support
- Facilitated group support
- One-to-one or family coaching
- Practical, hands on support
- Befriending



\*This list is not exhaustive – just what families have told us works best!



# THE PURPOSE OF THE FAMILY TOOLBOX ALLIANCE



## 2 Coordination of backbone functions to grow and sustain the model for the future

To support the people and services across the whole of Family Toolbox, there are some backbone functions that need to be in place. The core provider group will be responsible for making sure these additional functions are delivered, whether through delivering them directly or subcontracting them:

### **Business development and income generation**

One of the key objectives of the core provider group will be to promote growth and sustainability in the services and opportunities available for families for years to come. This will involve direct income generation through activities such as bid writing, coordination of partnership bids, proactive research into upcoming opportunities and tracking of such opportunities. We would also expect those within the core provider group to utilise their expertise to upskill other voluntary and community sector organisations who are affiliated with the 'membership mark'. This approach will require strong relationships to be built and maintained with local and national funders and clear communication about Family Toolbox and its unique approach.

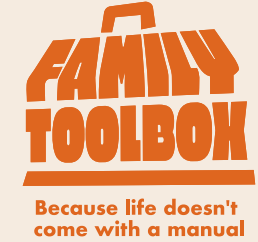
### **Data, insights and intelligence**

Keeping in touch with the real-life experiences of families through data and qualitative insights will be an important part of the core provider group's role. The group will need to understand not only the impact of the offer, but also be able to identify where there may be gaps, and to feed this into strategic governance structures so that a coordinated approach to commissioning can take place across the borough (and perhaps do some commissioning or grant-making themselves as an Alliance).

### **Marketing and communications**

The Alliance will need to make sure the word gets out there about Family Toolbox, so communications and marketing will need to be a priority! This includes ensuring correct use of the co-designed Family Toolbox brand through our ready-made brand guidelines.

# THE PURPOSE OF THE FAMILY TOOLBOX ALLIANCE



## 3 Helping to provide online tools and resources

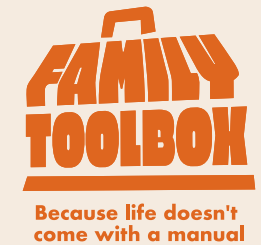
Families told us that they have faced barriers in knowing what is available to them, and in accessing that information quickly and without judgement. The Family Toolbox website will enable families to find what they need, whether it is the middle of the night or whilst they're sat in the supermarket carpark.

Families also told us that it is really important that this digital offer feels different to the usual council-run websites, so the Alliance will work together with the Council to curate content such as online tools, events, resources and contact information of local organisations, and make sure these are kept up to date and relevant.

Going forward there may be some scope for additional tasks for the online tools to be taken on by the Alliance and that can be revisited on future delivery plans.



# THE PURPOSE OF THE FAMILY TOOLBOX ALLIANCE



## 4 Supporting a growing network of wider organisations and partners under the Family Toolbox 'membership mark'

Many local and grassroots organisations already provide a huge number of opportunities for families to get involved in, and while not every organisation may want to be part of the Alliance Provider Group, organisations living the values of Family Toolbox will receive a Family Toolbox membership mark. The membership mark will quickly help families identify the people and organisations who are there to help if they need it, without judgement, criteria, or professional referrals. In addition, it will:

- Help organisations and groups to celebrate and showcase their strengths-based, empowering approach.
- Connect & nurture organisations and groups who have shared values, ambitions, and commitment to supporting families in Wirral.

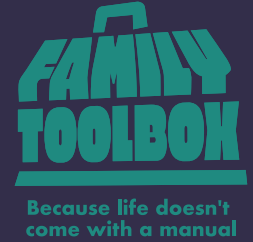
The Alliance will be responsible for developing and maintaining relationships across the borough with a wide range of partners and organisations. During consultation, a local organisation told us:

“

**The things that parents tell you they want are what organisations want too; we want to be listened to, we need it [support] to be accessible”**



# THE OBJECTIVES OF THE FAMILY TOOLBOX ALLIANCE



## The Alliance will have the following main objectives:

1. Ensure the support, activities and experiences that families have said they want are available and accessible, either through direct delivery or through subcontracting others to deliver these
2. Ensure the backbone activities are delivered to promote long-term growth and sustainability of the Family Toolbox
3. Develop and embed a core team who inspire and motivate others through clear, honest and consistent communication and through living the values of Family Toolbox
4. Support people to feel confident in using their own resources, and resources in the community to help them and their family thrive
5. Work closely with children, families and communities, statutory services, and strategic partners to improve the experience and outcomes for families of seeking additional help
6. Create and support a network of Family Toolbox member organisations, raising awareness of the offer for families and opportunities to get involved
7. Use a common language and collective approach to describing and measuring change for families

The specifics of the Family Toolbox offer will be detailed by the Alliance Providers, who will be contracted to lead Family Toolbox, guided by the principles, values and behaviours outlined in this document.

# WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE FOR THE FAMILY TOOLBOX ALLIANCE

## Success is when Wirral's children and families:

- Feel an increased sense of belonging, stability, and purpose in their lives
- Become confident in their ability to cope with life's challenges
- Take part in local and community activities
- Ask for and accept additional help when they need it
- Trust professionals, and feel trusted by them
- Are thriving

## Success within the wider community looks like:

- Families, partner organisations and wider professionals say organisations across Wirral continually display the Family Toolbox values.
- Relationships between WMBC and community partners are less transactional and more based on trust, honesty, and transparency.
- There is true fairness, equity and respect between families and professionals.





# THE VALUES OF THE FAMILY TOOLBOX ALLIANCE

Our extensive community listening project identified four core ways of working that will shape everything that Family Toolbox does:

## We give tools, not answers.

We believe that everyone has skills and strengths, so when people need a helping hand, we see what's already strong and coach to build up knowledge, skills and confidence. In all our relationships – whether families, communities or colleagues, we always do with - not to.

## We make sure families stay in control.

We are removing the language and behaviours of referrals, professional assessments, levels and thresholds so that we can really get to the heart of what's going on for families, as and when they choose.

## We work together.

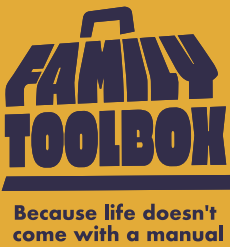
We don't just work together to get a great result: working together is, in and of itself, a great result. Everything we do is about building positive relationships (professionally and personally), so we put time, effort and commitment into building relationships with one another, being shaped by the perspectives and experiences of those around us.

## We keep things simple for families.

We prioritise people, over systems, processes and procedures. It's simple to get involved with - we're joined-up and accessible and we make sure that families can access something that can help them straight away. We speak in simple terms, and talk about asking for help as the way you show you're a great parent – not a failing one.



# FAMILY TOOLBOX WAYS OF WORKING



Families told us	The value we hold	What families feel	How we work
<i>"Trust that we know what we need - and that with the right people around us, we can do it."</i>	<b>We give tools, not answers</b>	Families feel believed in by those they work with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We look at what families have rather than what they don't,</li><li>• We use coaching to help build confidence, skills and a 'bounce-back-ability' for the future</li><li>• We are reliable, consistent and helpful</li><li>• We're honest in saying that we're all learning together</li><li>• We don't use labels or put people in boxes: we work with the person in front of us, and don't just refer on</li></ul>
<i>"Don't give me time restrictions, tick boxes or waiting lists. We want relationships, not traditional services."</i>	<b>We make sure families stay in control</b>	Families know that they can get the help they want when they want it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We let families stay in control of how and when they access support</li><li>• We don't use thresholds: we work with the person in front of us, and don't just refer on</li><li>• We work with the whole family, keeping them together and safe</li></ul>
<i>"Change the language around Early Help. It sounds like you only get a 'referral' when there's a problem, but we all need help at some points in our lives. It's there to hold you up."</i>	<b>We keep things simple</b>	Families feel welcome and find it easy to get what they need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We make resources available where people are, both in local communities and online</li><li>• We don't use jargon</li><li>• We champion asking for help</li></ul>
<i>"We want great communication so I know what support is out there and don't have to keep repeating my story to different organisations and professionals."</i>	<b>We work together</b>	Families feel listened to and that their journey to finding help is joined up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We build great relationships across organisations</li><li>• We have a 'one super team' mentality</li><li>• We take time to listen to and learn from each other</li></ul>



# WHY AN ALLIANCE MODEL?

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Having listened to families and local organisations and on reflecting on the need for flexibility, stability, and a relational approach to working, we knew we needed to make a radical change; not necessarily in the types of services available, but in the way they are commissioned and delivered.

An Alliance model should bring together a diverse set of providers. Alliances work best when there is variety of members (large/small, local only/bigger footprint, general/specialist). It's a really exciting way of working that puts communities and providers at the forefront, sharing skills and expertise to work towards a common goal for children and families in Wirral.

**An Alliance is more than a contract:** it's a way of working that focuses on relationships, alignment, and trust.

## HOW TO BID

Partners will choose each other, form their own group, and bid together to be the Family Toolbox 'Provider Group'. The most effective Alliances tend to have a maximum of six to eight providers, but this decision is up to you. The providers need to have a variety of expertise, skills, and ideas.

Regardless of size or background, each member of the group will need to:

- commit to, and be capable of, working with others to achieve common goals, sharing responsibility, risks, and opportunities.
- be committed to consultation and engagement with families and wider professionals who can assist the objectives.
- reorganise resources at a wider level to make the most of them and avoid duplication.
- demonstrate they understand the Family Toolbox, what families in Wirral need, the challenges in the area and be committed and motivated to seek sustainable solutions.
- be ready to lead and deliver complex transformational change for early intervention.



### What tools can we use to make sure we 'click' with potential partners?

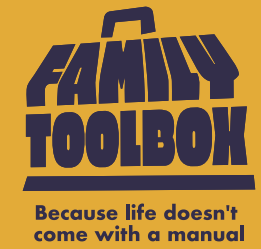
Choosing other partners for the Alliance is an important process. You will work closely together for the next 5 years, and possibly more, so it's **essential to choose partners with a vision and values similar to yours, and in line with the Family Toolbox**. As you've been reading this information pack, some people or organisations that already reflect some of the values of the Family Toolbox may have come to mind – these might be great people to approach.

**You will want to build a group of providers who can bring a range of different skills, knowledge, and abilities to the Alliance.**

As you begin to approach other organisations to talk about forming an Alliance, you might find the free downloadable resources (published with this document) helpful in your thinking and discussions.

Make sure you also check out the supporting documents which were published with this Information Pack for details about the application and evaluation process, timescales and deadlines.

**We are really enthusiastic about what we can achieve together through this exciting way of working. If you're an innovative and creative organisation who wants to partner with others and with us here at WMBC to work towards these shared goals for families, we'd love for you to apply.**

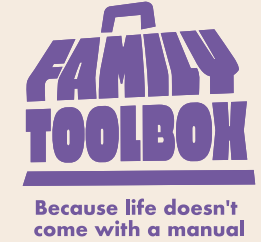


## **PART 2**

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# **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

## HOW WE GOT HERE



Since January 2019 Wirral MBC have worked with families, third sector organisations and Capacity, to explore what a new approach to Early Help in Wirral might look like. We have trialled different approaches to give families access to support, from self-referral options and partner referrals to more traditional routes in via the Integrated Front Door (IFD). At the heart of this has been a desire to give families more choice around how they access the support they need, and reducing traditional referral processes, has seen more families decide to get help earlier. How do we know this? We are seeing the tide begin to turn on the number of cases needing to be escalated to social care after being supported by Early Help services.

The voices of Wirral's families and the professionals working to support them, have been at the heart of these changes. The 'Why Community Matters' Report, released in 2020, summarises insight given by more than 450 Wirral families into key areas that need strengthening and adapting.

In response to the insight given in the report, we have tried and tested new ways of working to understand how they can help families to live happy and healthy lives. The successes of these pilots have helped to develop ways of working that will be prioritised in the Family Toolbox.

- The local Parent's Forum in Seacombe was supported to distribute over £35,000 in grants to small, grassroots organisations, to help families be the best they can be. By putting the local community in the lead, 19 new local grassroots projects were able to get up and running. This hyper-local, community-led approach to making decisions about how money is spent will be a core element of Family Toolbox.
- Across Wirral, Family Coaches have been building the confidence of over 400 families to use their own strengths to take on the challenges they face as a family. It has given parents space to reflect, helped them find the right tools, and 9 out of 10 who took part said they felt empowered and more confident to make positive change for themselves. As one of the mums taking part said:

***"You've gotta put in as much as they give, to make it work."***

The role of coaching is a key part of the new approach – in both how we work with families and also together as teams.

- With the support of experts and professionals working in Wirral, we have also explored options for commissioning that put relationships at the heart of this approach.

## WHAT FAMILIES TOLD US

When we listened to families, they spoke candidly about the barriers that prevented them from accessing help, or seeking additional help, in the past:

1. **Fear and shame.** Families described the stigma and embarrassment of 'needing Early Help' and talked of times where support felt more like it highlighted failures than built on strengths.
2. **Services at breaking point.** Despite the best efforts of many professionals, families told us of times they were turned away from support because their problem wasn't 'bad enough', as services were pulled towards reacting to crisis, rather than preventing problems from escalating. They also talked of services that rush to address surface issues rather than taking time to understand underlying problems.
3. **Wrong time, wrong place.** Many families we spoke to want Early Help support that is closer to home, to avoid costly travel and transport.
4. **Communicating too late, or not at all.** Families emphasised how important it is that services are well promoted and joined up with each other, so that they can find what they need when they need it, and so they don't have to keep repeating their story to different organisations.

“

Please be mindful of the fear I have of having my children taken away from me. My default thought? I am the world's worst parent and you can't tell someone otherwise if that's how we feel.” - Steph, West Wirral

I had post-natal depression after my second baby and despite having been a school professional and knowing that Early Help wasn't about removing children, as soon as someone said to me 'I think it would be worth considering TAF for you and the family', I felt the blood drain from my face. I was scared even though I knew from my professional background that it was supposed to be helpful, I felt like she thought I couldn't cope”

- Alison

## WHAT FAMILIES TOLD US

Families asked for approaches across these themes, which will form the basis of the Family Toolbox Customer Service Standards:

### EMPOWER ME

“People should choose their own entry point - ‘This is the person I’ve decided to talk to’ – no referrals. It should be organic.”

- David

### COMMUNICATE WITH ME

“I think there are a lot of universal community services that we don’t really know the scope of or don’t hear much about until you’re in need. For example, I didn’t realise that you could still access the health visitor after the two-year check-up.”

- Andrea

### BE LOCAL TO ME

“Schools are the prime place to have someone to talk to about things because we are there 24/7. There needs to be more compassion and empathy for young people, and shorter waiting times for support.”

- Annie, 18

### SUPPORT MY WHOLE FAMILY

“We need somewhere we can go which is nice and calm and relaxed where we could talk together with a professional.”

- Nana Mary, Wallasey.

### INSPIRE ME

“I would say to other mums: don’t be afraid to ask for help. What I really wanted from support as a new parent was someone to reassure me that I am doing a good job and to tell me to keep going.”

- Lisa, Seacombe

### CONNECT ME

“It really does take a village to raise a child”

- Lucy

“Just having adult company is support enough sometimes! Having a baby can be the loneliest time.”

- Jenny & Ian, Bebington

## WHY WE ARE DOING THIS

The picture for Wirral's children and families is mixed, with around 1 in 6 school-aged children having special educational needs<sup>1</sup>, and nearly 1 in 5 of children and young people living in poverty (December 2018).

The number of referrals for support across the borough grows year on year. The main reasons for referrals for support from Early Help tend to be:

- Managing behaviour
- Child mental health
- Parenting

Families tell us that these challenges are often the symptom of other underlying issues that they are facing at home – they don't tell the full story.

Parents identified four key challenges where they've struggled to access more informal support that could have made the difference for their family, and stopped problems getting worse:

- Mental health
- Social isolation
- Managing change
- Supporting children with additional needs

The Council and its partners want to make Wirral a great place for children, young people, and their families. By putting the power into the hands of parents and carers to identify and access the help they need, we want families to be able to tackle the challenges they're facing earlier on and prevent them turning into a crisis. We want to give them tools instead of answers, and build on their strengths, helping them to develop a 'bounce-back-ability' for whatever the future holds.

Families and professionals who have been on this journey with us have spoken of a real appetite across Wirral for meaningful change. This new model will therefore bring in new ways of working, to make sure that families can access what they need to be the best they can be – both through what is on offer and also how it's made available.

**“WHEN WE DON'T HAVE EXTENDED FAMILY SUPPORT I DON'T KNOW ANYWHERE TO GO FOR HELP WHEN I'VE GOT THE BABY.”**



# ALLIANCE AGREEMENTS

## Working together as an Alliance

Making decisions together as an Alliance requires clear common goals and a collective commitment to achieve them. With these in place, there is an environment of trust that enables:

- collective ownership, responsibility and accountability
- collective response to external influences and risk
- decision-making that prioritises the wider system
- pooling of skills, assets and experience
- hard conversations and working through potential conflict
- flexibility to evolve over time.

This way of working is brilliant at bringing about the kind of change families and professionals in Wirral are asking for. Alliances can design and implement new ways of working at a lower risk for all individual organisations and unblock longer standing issues to create change in the wider system. The agreement lasts a minimum of 5 years giving the Alliance the stability to make long-term differences.

Alliancing is different to traditional contracting models; it enables providers to work as one team, without needing a new organisational form, and create, in effect, a virtual organisation. It allows individual services to maintain their identities, while contributing their unique expertise and skill alongside others towards one set of outcomes.

The synergy of Alliancing creates much more than the sum of its parts. All parties work towards the same goal, take collective ownership of opportunities, responsibilities and risk, and make decisions together to reach it.

The relationship with the commissioner is quite different to more traditional contracting models, as the procuring organisation (Wirral MBC in this case) is also a participant in the Alliance. There is no need for a lead contractor/sub-contractor hierarchy – all members are equal.

The providers at the heart of Family Toolbox will spearhead the new way of working that families and professionals have asked for, to help Wirral's children and families be the best they can be.

# FEATURES OF ALLIANCES

The Alliance Agreement (see the Alliance document shared on The Chest alongside this document) is the formal documentation of the commitment of each member.

The key features of this Alliance are:

**One contract and one performance framework.** An Alliance contract creates collaboration without the need for new organisational forms. The parties in the Alliance have a shared contract with the commissioner which describes the Alliance's outcomes and relationships.

**Aligned objectives and shared risks.** All parties in the Alliance work to the same outcomes and measures of success, and everyone takes responsibility for implementing the Alliance's decisions. The risk is shared across all parties (including the commissioner).

**Shared co-ordination and collective accountability.** Success is judged on overall performance, not to the performance of individual parties, so amongst the Alliance members there is a strong sense of 'your problem is my problem; your success is my success'.

**Based on trust and transparency.** The 'virtual organisation' will have an appropriate governance and management structure that gives accountability both for the team and also individual organisations.

**Change and innovation in delivery are expected.** Members sign up to the Family Toolbox principles, objectives, values and behaviours. The Alliance then makes decisions based on these and on the outcomes to be achieved together. The method of delivery for these outcomes is the decision of the Alliance, and these can change over time.

In addition, we expect the Alliance to seek external alternative funding sources that will help achieve the Alliance objectives and outcomes. Any such funding received will be subject to the same open and transparent reporting and accountability processes to fully comply with financial governance requirements.

The Alliance will need to constantly review, improve and recast what it does to ensure it can respond to changing needs and adapt and improve on an ongoing basis.

# PRINCIPLES AT THE HEART OF ALLIANCES

Alliance provider groups should:

- take collective responsibility for all of the risks involved in providing services under this agreement;
- make decisions on the basis of what's best for Wirral children and families;
- commit to unanimous, principle and value-based decision-making on all key issues;
- adopt a culture of 'no fault, no blame' between the partners and to seek to avoid all disputes and litigation (except in very limited cases of wilful default);
- adopt open book accounting and transparency in all matters relating to the Alliance;
- appoint and select key roles on the basis of who's the best person for them;
- act according to the Family Toolbox values and behaviours at all times

There's more detail in the Alliance Agreement which is published alongside this document on The Chest about the contractual obligations of the Alliance.

## Keeping people engaged

This redesign has been fully informed by the people who are most impacted by it: families and professionals. As the Alliance begins to deliver transformational change, it needs to be aware of its wide impact and implications, including on Wirral children and families, service providers, staff, and the wider community.

Key partners and people with lived experience need to be involved at all levels including decision making, consultation, delivery, monitoring and evaluation. How this - which is over and above consultation and involvement at a service level - operates in practice will be developed by the core provider group.

## Getting the right people for the job

Transformational change will require a team with a range of skills and experiences who can offer different types of support. The providers will develop and implement a dynamic plan for workforce development, ensuring that the staff delivering services are well trained and supported to deliver on the outcomes of our core provider group. Alongside paid staff, individuals with lived experience, volunteers and peer mentors can also contribute to the delivery of the services provided.

## WHAT KEEPS ALLIANCE MEMBERS ON THE SAME PAGE AS THEY WORK TOGETHER?

An Alliance is not a separate legal entity; it is a formal collaboration where the partners share responsibility and accountability. Partners in the core provider group will share in the design and delivery of services based on a 'best for Wirral children and families' approach, and its success is based on its collective performance, not the performance of individual organisations.

The Alliance Leadership Team will consist of senior members of each of its provider organisations, including a commissioning representative (in this case from WMBC), who can make decisions on behalf of their organisations. The Alliance Leadership Team is accountable to the commissioner and responsible for things like the strategy and leadership of The Alliance, ensuring the outcomes and objectives are met, as well as setting up management structures, agreeing the governance of the approach, and ensuring that the required data collection methods are in place. Sub-groups of the Alliance Leadership Team might include an Alliance Management Team, who will be responsible for day-to-day operations such as implementing service delivery, whilst regularly reviewing activity and performance to find improvements and mitigate risks.

The Alliance Leadership Team should connect with partners from across the public and voluntary sector, education, Public Health, children's sector, adults' sector and community members (e.g., parents) to ensure vision and ethos are aligned across various strategies across the borough.

Our Alliance will require a long-term commitment to new ways of working. In the application stage, each individual provider will need to demonstrate the commitment of their parent organisation's board or similar (e.g., Trustees) to making the Alliance a success throughout the lifetime of the contract.

## HOW IT FITS WITH WIDER WORK ACROSS WIRRAL

There's a shift in Wirral towards closer working with the third sector, families and communities, enabling them to design and deliver the services they want and need. During COVID-19 pandemic, for example, the group of third sector organisations that came together in the Humanitarian Cell made a huge difference through working in true collaboration towards a common goal.

Family Toolbox will invest in local organisations and embed opportunities for families to feed into the way things work.

The new model meets the five outcomes for the Wirral 2025 plan, and the associated Community Wealth Building outcomes:

### Sustainable Environment

Increasing Local  
procurement results in  
shorter supply chains

Procurement in Wirral is  
used to build community  
wealth

### Brighter Futures

Workforce Strategies are  
linked across institutions

Wealth that exists in  
Wirral is harnessed to  
increase investment in  
local communities

### Inclusive Economy

Communities have a direct  
say in what happens to the  
wealth generated by them

Residents are employed in  
secure, well paid jobs with  
good Ts&Cs

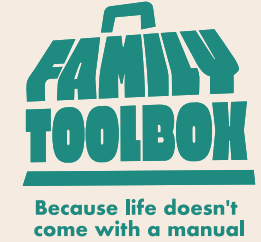
### Active & Healthy Lifestyles

People with secure, well  
paid jobs are happier and  
healthier

### Safe & Pleasant Communities

People have greater pride  
and accountability in  
caring for their assets

Council assets are used to  
build community wealth



## FAMILY TOOLBOX BRAND

To help families find the right resources, information and people, we need a strong brand to promote the big picture of family support in Wirral. Wirral's voluntary and public sectors already have many strong organisational brands, so to make sure we don't lose this, the brand will serve as a membership mark brand that partners can use to align themselves to the wider offer across Early Help.

In 2021 we designed a new family-facing brand alongside Wirral families and professionals to sit separate to WMBC branding. This brand aims to:

- look and feel very different to WMBC or statutory branding
- put one joined-up super-team to help direct families to the right place
- be attractive to families and make clear what it offered

Families chose 'Family Toolbox: Because life doesn't come with a manual' as the name and strapline of the new brand, because it was self-explanatory, felt positive, welcoming and empowering, and they liked its visual identity.



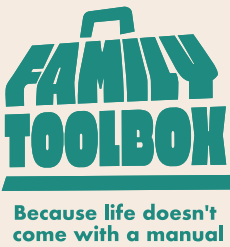
**Because life doesn't  
come with a manual**

“

Family Toolbox sounds like you're given ways to cope and change things that you're struggling with - more about you being in control.”



# FAMILY TOOLBOX BRAND



The Alliance will be able to access the Family Toolbox brand guide so that they understand the expectations to be met in their role as brand manager.

To get a sense of the ‘feel’ of the brand in the Family Toolbox communications check out the brand model below. This is quick way of showing the key aspects of how Family Toolbox will be communicated is just an outline of the core ‘feel’ we’re trying to get across in the brand:

## FEATURES

- They're a super-team – people might be employed by different organisations but they're all working on the same thing.
- It's made up of organisations with a common cause
- Organisations who are part it sign-up to the following things:
  - They're referral Free – families 'opt-in'
  - They're more like friends rather than professionals
  - They're very human
  - They want to help families develop bounce-back-ability
  - They work with the whole family
  - They have lots of knowledge and resources
  - They give families tools – self-help, online tools, coaching – local budgets for local projects.
  - We help family members grow
  - They offer a consistent approach/offer
- They're not part of the Council/a Council service
- Organisations that are part of it have great relationships with each other
- It works with a family whatever challenge they have
- They're anchored in the communities they works in

## BENEFITS

- It helps give families a new perspective on life
- It helps families see the support network around them; "you're not doing it on your own".
- They get the right people in the right place at the right time – first time.
- It makes sure organisations and families feel like they're part of something
- They make sure organisations and families build up one another, support one another – together we are stronger.
- They are gurus at this stuff and can give you loads of information
- They see what you have rather than what you haven't and help you see this.
- Families don't need an 'appointment'
- They put families back in control and empower you
- They give families confidence
- They build resilience in parents and their kids.

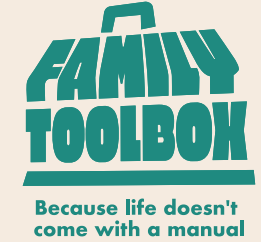
- It feels like a professional service
- It is defined by people not services.
- It does 'with families', not 'for' or 'to'
- They make it easy for families to use their knowledge, tools and resources and to access support that doesn't look or feel like a statutory service.
- They get invited in and out of their lives by the families - the power is in the family's hands.
- They give people a sense of what it feels like to be part of a community – it makes them feel good - "You're not going into an appointment to explain everything, just go in and have a cup of tea and a chat."
- They always give families their undivided attention
- The people involved don't judge and treat people like they'd like to be treated themselves
- They make sure families hold the power
- They can offer information and resource, but families choose what they want to take
- Everything they do is about positive relationships – professionally and personally
- Information sharing is smooth
- They are always there in the background

## EXPERIENCE

- They care
- They listen
- They value others and their opinions
- They are consistent
- They are positive
- They are coaches
- They are trustworthy and have integrity
- They are warm
- They are welcoming/approachable
- They are knowledgeable
- They are open and honest
- They are a trusted friend (you can tell them anything and they'd still be there)

## PERSONALITY





## FAMILY TOOLBOX BRAND AND MEMBERSHIP MARK (IN PROGRESS)

Many families said they found it hard to find the support they needed, or didn't know what was available for them until it was too late. This has led us to prioritise our communications and to develop digital support tools that are attractive to families and can be accessed by everyone at that moment of need.

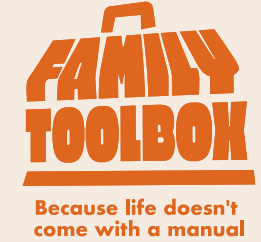
While the Alliance group will be the contracted Family Toolbox members, the wider network of organisations has an important part to play too. Any organisations that align themselves to the Family Toolbox values and behaviours will be able to hold the Family Toolbox membership mark and promote their services on the online resource hub. The shared branding, language and values will help all organisations offering support to families feel and look like they are part of one system and using the mark will show that organisations are proud to be part of something bigger, and are committed to doing things differently for the families of Wirral.

The membership mark will be launched at the same time as the Alliance and will be overseen by the Family Toolbox Alliance provider group. Member organisations will receive posters, leaflets and window stickers to promote their part in the Family Toolbox. They will also be able to access training and other support. As with all brands, member organisations will receive simple and clear guidance on usage of this brand and its structure.

“

Many people don't know that Early Help is primarily about support and not a pathway to social services, so this needs to feel like a non-statutory brand.”





## FAMILY TOOLBOX DIGITAL HUB (IN PROGRESS)

Many of the challenges faced by families were caused by being unable to access family support when they first needed it, whether because of waiting lists, services not being open at the right time, or simply not knowing what was available locally to support their family<sup>2</sup>. As a result, since the beginning of 2021 we have been designing online tools with Wirral's families and professionals to help parents and carers:

- find resources and information to help them right here, right now, through a searchable resource bank
- find out about local support services through a searchable database of organisations, activities, and events
- introduce themselves to an organisation they'd like support from
- use self-reflection tools to identify their own goals and areas to learn about find out what's happening in their area review and recommend resources, information and services

These new tools will make it easier for families to find people and places where they can get the support they need and make it possible for them to get that support without a referral from a professional. Where parents and carers do need someone to help them find what they need, there will be the facility to do this too: the Family Toolbox will be publicly available without needing a log in, and professionals will be able to 'introduce' a family to an organisation through the site.

“

**Local communities, face to face or online; indeed, any kind of supportive relationship all play a massive role in equipping families with the necessary skills to keep going when life is tough**

**- Lucy, Parent**

“

[We need] great communication so I know what support is out there and do not have to keep repeating my story to different organisations and professionals.”

- Andy, Parent

## FAQS

### What is Familytoolbox.co.uk?

Families told us that they have faced barriers in knowing what is available to them, and in accessing information quickly and without judgement. The Family Toolbox website will enable families to find what they need, whether it is the middle of the night, or whilst they're sat in the supermarket carpark.

Familytoolbox.co.uk is a free online hub that supports Wirral's parents and carers. It has been co-designed with local parents and professionals and has loads of information about everyday family life to share. It will help parents find what they need for themselves, boosting their confidence and skills, and helping families develop that vital bounce-back ability, so that they can weather life's storms.

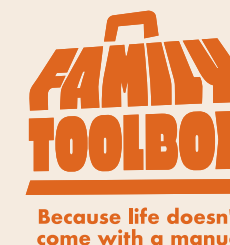
### Who is Familytoolbox.co.uk for?

It's a publicly available site designed by, and for, Wirral's parents and carers. It's free to use and has information on everything from healthy relationships to managing a hectic household.

### What can Familytoolbox.co.uk do?

Wirral's parents and carers can use familytoolbox.co.uk to find resources, people, and places to help them with anything specific they want to work on. They can:

- find ideas and information to help them, through a searchable bank of resources
- find out about local support services through a searchable database of organisations, activities, and events
- introduce themselves to an organisation they'd like support from
- use self-reflection tools to identify their own goals and what they want to learn about
- find out what's happening in their area review and recommend resources, information, and services



### How will the Alliance contribute to Familytoolbox.co.uk?

The Alliance will work together with the Council to curate content such as online tools, events, resources, and contact information for local organisations, and make sure these are kept up to date and relevant. Going forward there may be some scope for additional tasks for the online tools to be taken on by the Alliance and that can be revisited in future delivery plans.

The Alliance will be supported by the Council to ensure that their content is safe, accessible, and maintained, however the Council is not 'leading' the Alliance rather working as a partner to protect and promote the interest, work, and ambitions of the Alliance, whilst keeping families, and their personal information, safe online.



Because life doesn't  
come with a manual

# FINALLY

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We would like to say a huge thank you to all of the children, young people, parents, carers, and of course you as professionals for joining us on this journey so far. We really couldn't have done it without you.

FAMILY TOOLBOX IS A PROJECT FUNDED BY:

