

# Warrington Borough Council

## Family Support Team

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# Overview

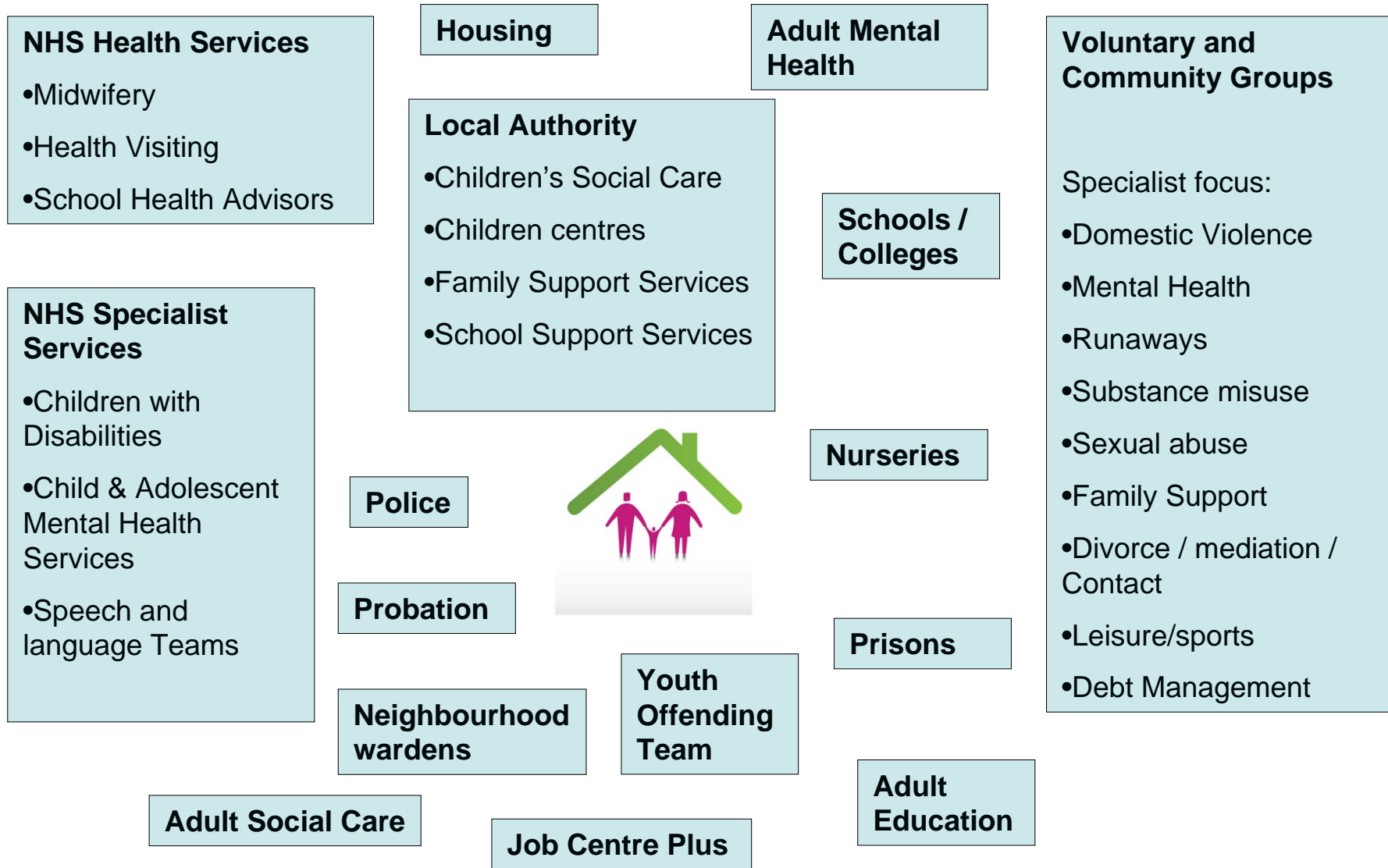
- Defining Complex Families
- Provision in the past
- Family Pathfinder Pilot Project
- Results of Pilot
- Impact – Families & Services

# Defining Complex Families

Families that are experiencing multiple factors that can effect family functioning:

- Domestic Violence
- Poor Mental Health (Child or adult)
- Substance Misuse (Drugs/Alcohol)
- Poor parenting
- Children – School attendance / behaviour
- Housing Issues
- Debt
- Poor Physical Health (Child or Health)
- Crime – perpetrator / victim
- Worklessness / poverty
- Poor family relationships

# Navigating the system



# Research on practice in 2006

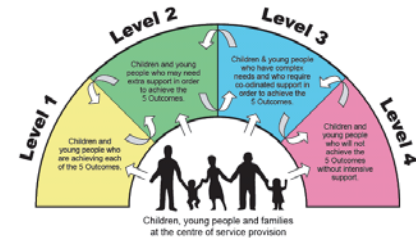
- Agencies working in silos
- Poor information sharing between services
- Each service dealing with specific issues in isolation
- Large volume of 'scattergun referrals' and inappropriate referrals creating 'bottlenecks' in the system
- Unclear thresholds for intervention
- Duplications of services / assessments / interventions
- Dealing with symptoms not the route cause
- Families accessing 'revolving door' for services
- Children 'slipped through net' resulting in more crisis intervention
- Intervention were often too late
- Wasted resources and more costly interventions

# Warrington Family Support Model



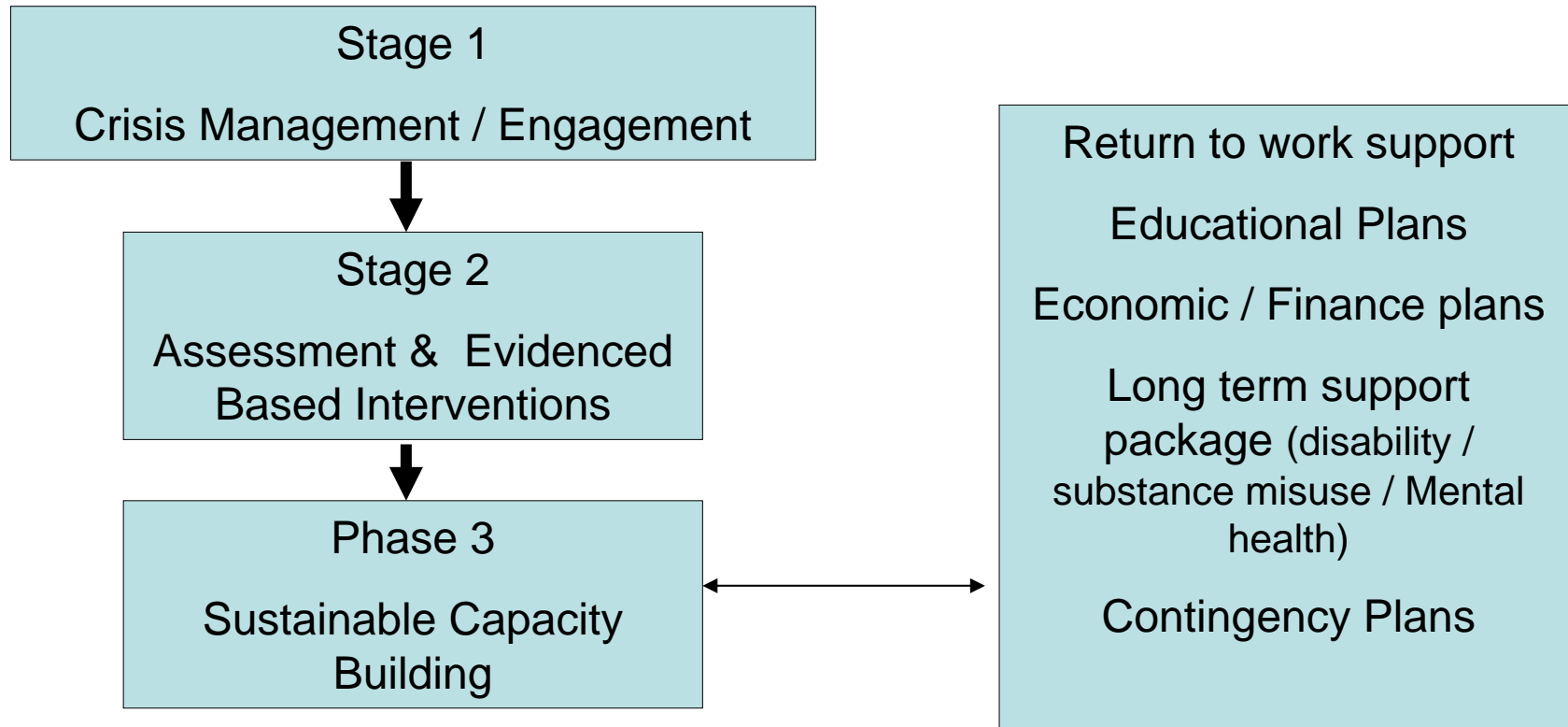
- Agreed in 2007 by all services working with Children & Young People
- Neutral set of agreed procedures and protocols across key partners
- Information sharing protocol
- Agreed interagency documentation
- Ongoing interagency training programme
- Sets and measures outcomes for individuals
- Created system for integrated working with over 450 families
- Nationally recognised area of exemplar practice

# Warrington Family Pathfinder Project – Complex families



- 3 year pilot grant awarded in 2008
- Intensive Support to most complex families
- Trained Family Support Workers with a low caseload – 7 in total
- Family Support Workers act as ‘Lead Professional’ coordinating a package of support
- Devised methods for gaining trust and engagement of families
- Worked with ‘whole family’ not just individuals
- Developed links with Adult Services and trialled new ways of working collaboratively

# LA Support Service - Stages of Intervention

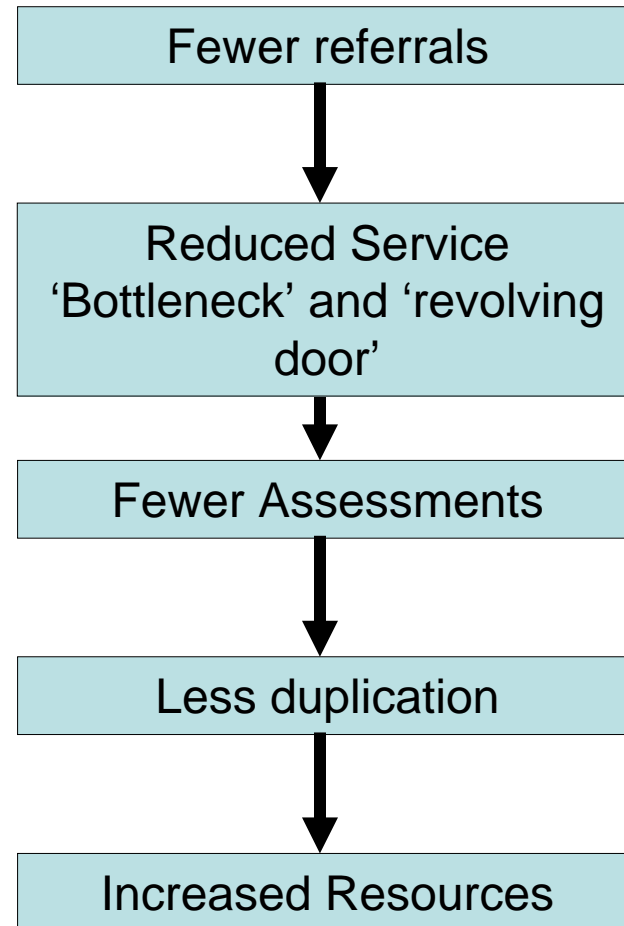


Average length of intervention 3 – 9 months

## Benefits to families

- Improved seamless provision to families – increased service user satisfaction
- Improved community feedback around ‘troublesome families’
- Fewer children presenting for statutory service intervention
- Reduced the ‘revolving door’ for many families
- Dealing with cause not symptoms – more sustainable change

# Benefits to Services



# Benefits to Services

## Savings ??

- Initial indications show £1 spent = £4 saved
- Reduced cost per families = increased reach
- Meets targets of ‘doing more for less’
- Requires front loaded resources in universal / prevention / early intervention services as saving is often in acute services
- Service redesign and cultural change has occurred organically
  - Dedicated Family Support Service
  - At a time of budget pressures there is a desire to maintain focus on early intervention and prevention services
  - More roles across all services developed to undertake preventative work
    - School Family Support Workers

# Results of pilot

- Family Pathfinder became a WBC core funded project in 2011.
- Merged with Children Centres Workers to provide a dedicated Family Support Service for Children, Young People and their Families.
- Continue to be the leaders in 'Whole Family' Assessments and Care Planning
- Warrington is judged by Ofsted to have a strong Family Support Service which has helped to reduce numbers of children needing to access statutory services.
- Learning from the project is informing new government initiatives such as:
  - Community Budgets
  - Local Integrated Services pilots
  - Early Intervention Places
  - DWP – ESF Work programme for complex families

**Thank you for listening**