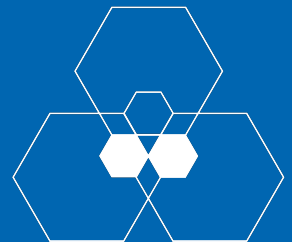




Wigan Family Hubs

Shared leadership with our
VCFSE sector and communities



Introduction

Wigan Council recognises the essential role of the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector (VCFSE) for a system-wide shift towards early family help and prevention.

A core component within Wigan's strategy, Progress with Unity, Wigan Council set an ambition to foster collaboration, break down power imbalances and embed equal responsibilities and partnerships across VCFSE and statutory services.

Across Spring 2024 to Spring 2025, VCFSE organisations, residents, system partners and the Wigan Council Early Family Help team worked collaboratively to co-design a network of family hubs for Leigh with a clear focus on VCFSE leadership and empowerment.

Learning from this process is feeding into the development of the Progress with Unity community pillar.

This pack outlines:

Thriving and community-led Family Hubs for Leigh

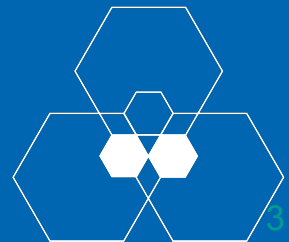
- Approach
- A networked approach to Family Hubs, Spaces and Offers
- Cross-sector accountability and governance
- Principles for working as cross-sector partners
- Enablers of community-led Family Hubs

Family-led core features of Leigh Family Hubs

- Zoning in on Family Voice
- Core Features of Leigh Family Hubs

Where next

Thriving and community-led Family Hubs for Leigh





Thriving and community-led family hubs for Leigh

Rooted in their strategy Progress with Unity and a firm belief that increased collaboration can result in better outcomes for families, Wigan Council are committed to genuine partnership working with VCFSE and communities.

This includes a better understanding of services and organisations already delivering impact in families' lives, creating opportunities for VCFSE and communities to take the lead in decision-making, and embedding family hubs as trusted community-owned assets.

In spring 2024, Wigan's Early Family Help team explored a new approach to family hub development in Leigh. VCFSE sector partners were invited to be the first to be part of a co-design process, sharing and shaping how a new family hub for Leigh can best serve the needs of families, and work with them and local delivery stakeholders and organisations to sustain the model and ensure that families are using and benefiting from it.

This resulted in the set-up of a cross-sector Collaborative, meeting on a monthly basis to develop a **community-led Family Hub network** for Leigh.

What this has looked like in practice:

- Engagement of approximately 30 Leigh-based VCFSE organisations through 121 meetings and a monthly in-person Collaborative
- Developing a networked approach to family hubs in Leigh, fostering connections to existing spaces and setting up a main hub with three locally-rooted link sites
- Co-designing core features of a family hub as guidance for decision-making
- Co-designing principles of collaboration, setting out new ways of working across sectors with an emphasis on VCFSE leadership
- Launching a Family Voice Tool for continuous engagement with children, young people and families
- Embedding new governance mechanisms, prioritising shared leadership



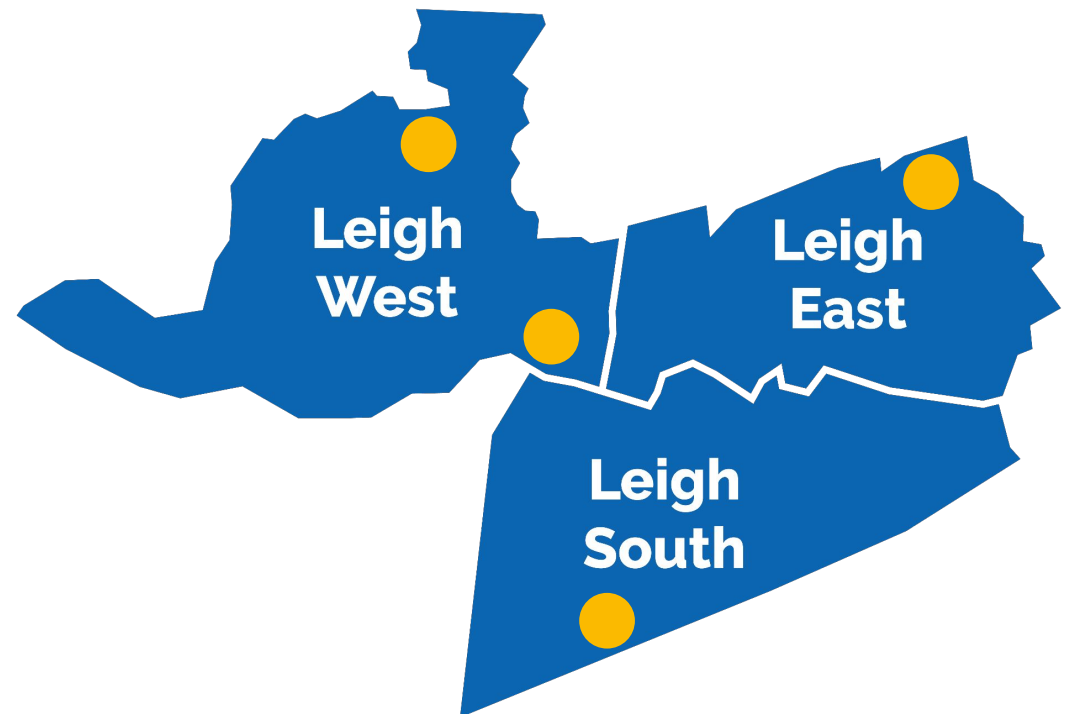
A networked approach to Family Hubs, Spaces and Offers

Taking a networked approach to Family Hubs

Initial collaboration with VCFSE partners clearly emphasised the need for strongly connected local spaces for delivering family support.

This led to the joint decision of setting up a network of family hubs in Leigh, comprised of:

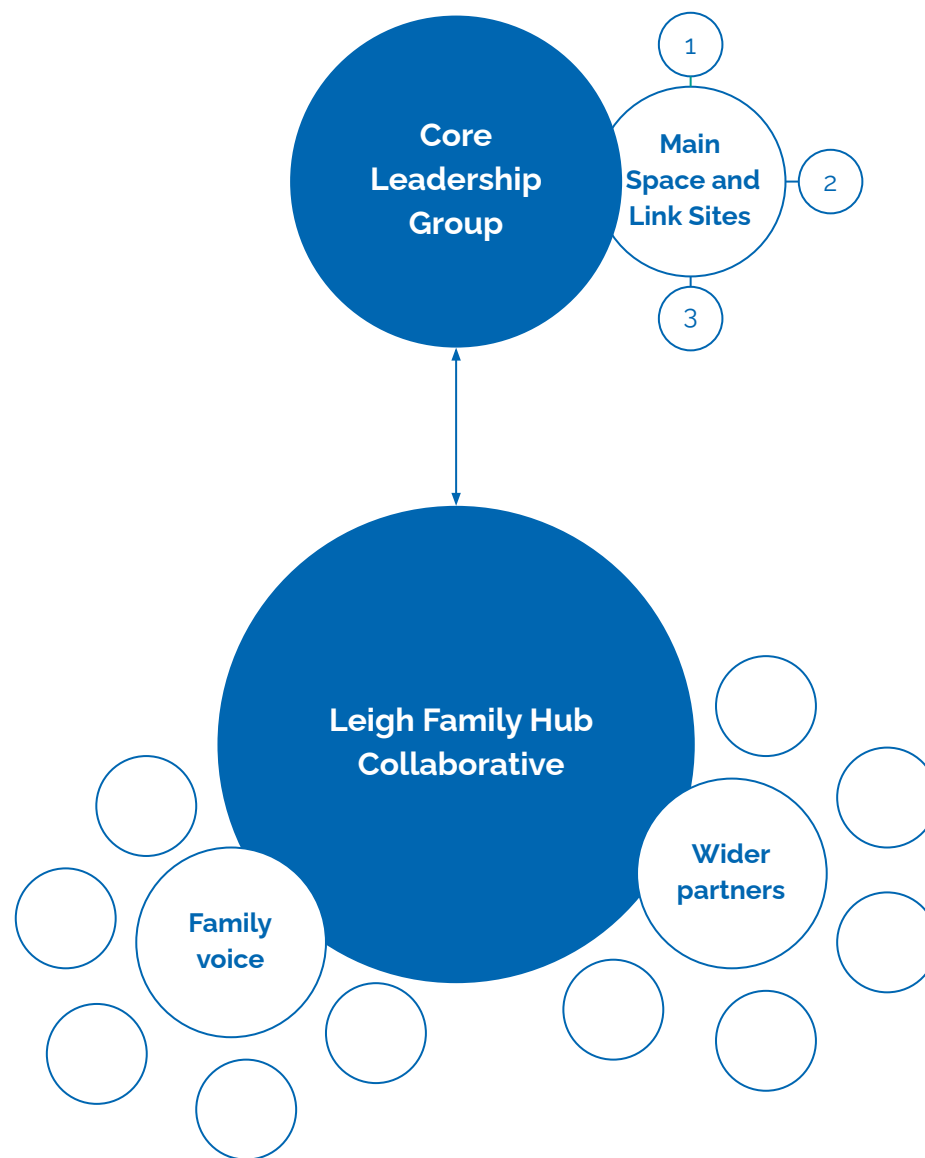
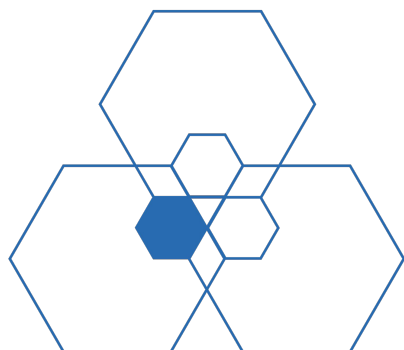
- A [new, centrally located Family Hub](#) (Walmesley Road Nursery, next to Family Welfare)
- Three Link Sites across key strategic areas, ensuring accessible support at people's doorsteps. Link Sites include:
 - [HF Works](#), reaching communities in Higher Folds
 - [The A-Team Hub](#), focusing on SEND provision
 - The Chapel, the Start Well Centre in West Leigh





Cross-sector accountability and governance

The decision to work across VCFSE-led link sites and the continuous engagement of VCFSE and statutory sector partners via the monthly Collaborative enabled the Wigan Council Early Family Help team to set up collective governance arrangements, reflecting the principles of shared leadership and decision-making.





**Core
Leadership
Group**

Includes Wigan Council Early Family Help team and representatives from across the t

- Build on insights from Leigh Family Hub Collaborative
- Deliver on core agreement for service delivery
- Develop and deliver a three year plan to ensure sustainability and uphold principles of shared partnership between VCFSE and Council
- Analyse data: what is and is not working well; gaps across hubs
- Review and act on community voice / feedback / worries
- Progress and share funding opportunities for VCFSE sector
- Draft timetables of what will run in each site.

**Leigh Family Hub
Collaborative**

Includes VCFSE providers, families and wider partners. This group meets on a quarterly basis to:

- Provide guidance and steer on core principles of Leigh's Family Hubs
- Improve smooth delivery across a range of services and spaces, ensuring connectivity across Leigh's family service provision
- Embed culture of collaboration across sector partners to provide early stage support



Principles for working as cross-sector partners

We are grounded in the principle of community empowerment.

We believe in unlocking the strengths of Leigh's families and communities and remove barriers, making it easier for the people of Leigh to do what they do best.

We start with trust.

We mean what we say to each other, we stick to our promises, and we work in good faith.

We firmly believe in each other as partners both across organisations and sectors.

We each bring the best of ourselves to this work, and harness our unique personal and professional perspectives, and our diverse strengths and assets.

We take an empathetic approach to partnership working.

We understand the pressures our context puts on us, and that these will manifest differently across our organisations and sectors. Our collective decision-making will reflect on this and be based on empathy and mutual understanding.

We operate under the principles of honesty and transparency.

We trust the partnership as a safe space for exploration, debate and finding solutions - so, we share the information required to do so.

We hold authentic respect for each other.

We know that a thriving partnership celebrates the diversity of perspectives and opinions. We are committed to deeply listen to each other, hear and understand different viewpoints, which includes admitting to ourselves what we don't know.

We create win-win situations for each other.

We know that this is the perfect foundation for long-term impact in families' lives.

We have both high aspirations and open minds.

We strive for better from each other and, in turn, for Leigh too. We are open to new and different ideas and think creatively to overcome challenges together



Key enablers for community and VCFSE-led Family Hubs

Proactive 121 engagement

The Wigan Early Family Help team prioritised proactive 121 engagement with a broad range of VCFSE leaders in Leigh. This included face to face meetings and online calls, hearing about their work and their aspirations for a family hub, challenges faced and opportunities. This marked a vital stepping stone for subsequent relationship building.

Regularity and personal connection

Meeting once a month and face to face allowed the Leigh Family Hub Collaborative to foster collaboration at every step of the way as well as to build momentum and energy.

Trusting partners with key information

For example being open about early conversations about potential Family Hub sites; budgets; and staffing, where this is appropriate. Sharing an intention before this has turned into action, has increased trust in the Wigan Council team.

Time for relationship building

Instead of pressing ahead with a given timeline, the Wigan Council team were open to work at the speed of trust building. This approach enabled them to visibly act on decisions made during co-design sessions, deepening relationships with VCFSE partners.

Developing a shared purpose

That is grounded in trust in families and communities. This has held the cross-sector Collaborative together throughout.

Building a long-term vision and a pathway situated in the here and now

For Wigan this has meant embedding a vision for greater VCFSE and community leadership, including growing VCFSE-led Family Hubs across Wigan. The Collaborative recognised that this transition takes time, enabling them to set out a path for sharing power gradually, which led to the decision of VCFSE-led link sites.

“VCFSE needed time to build trust in us and get to know us before getting down to the “nitty gritty”, groups haven’t always had positive experiences with council reps. Groups needed to see us follow through with what we said”

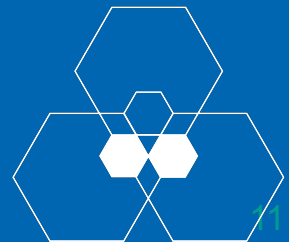
- WIGAN COUNCIL

“Keeping clear and open pathways of communication, creating a safe space for open and honest discussions helps us find solutions that work for everyone. Meeting regularly, face to face and with interactive activities was beneficial”

- VCFSE



Core features of Leigh Family Hubs



Listening to our families

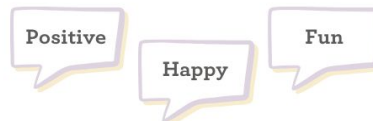
Over the Summer, the Leigh Family Hub Collaborative used 'Our Family' tool to engage with families across Leigh and deepen their understanding of families' support needs and aspirations for a Hub.

This process shaped the co-design of the Core Features of Leigh Family Hubs, bringing to life families' insights and ensuring they are at the heart of future decision-making.



Akinyemi family

We are the Akinyemi family.
We are Omolola (Mum), Samuel (14), and Elizabeth (17).
We are proud to be Nigerian but had to flee so live here as asylum seekers. We live in Leigh but don't have any networks or contacts here.

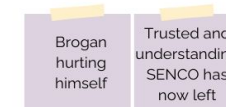


Our hopes & fears

Hopes for the future



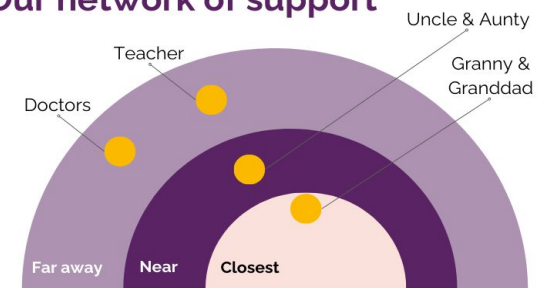
Fears



Things we would change



Our network of support

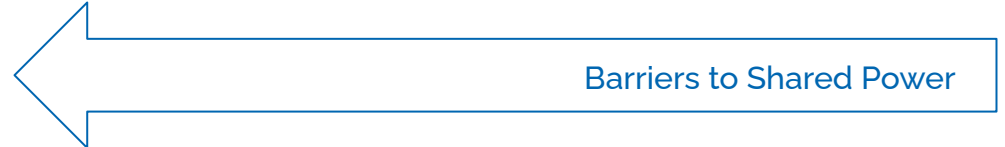
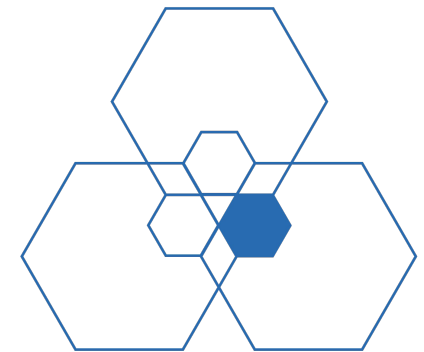




Tool for working towards shared power

The role of power

The group explored the role of power in this work as a common thread which keeps on shaping how we think about the potential of a partner-led hub. We mapped our own sense of power in this space on a 'power map' and explored what it might take to move from *a sense of powerlessness to power*.



- Driven by a clear, shared vision
- Clear objectives and planning together
- Commitment
- Broad representation
- Trust

- Inclusivity
- Shared resources
- Compromise
- Good Communications
- Accountability
- Delegation

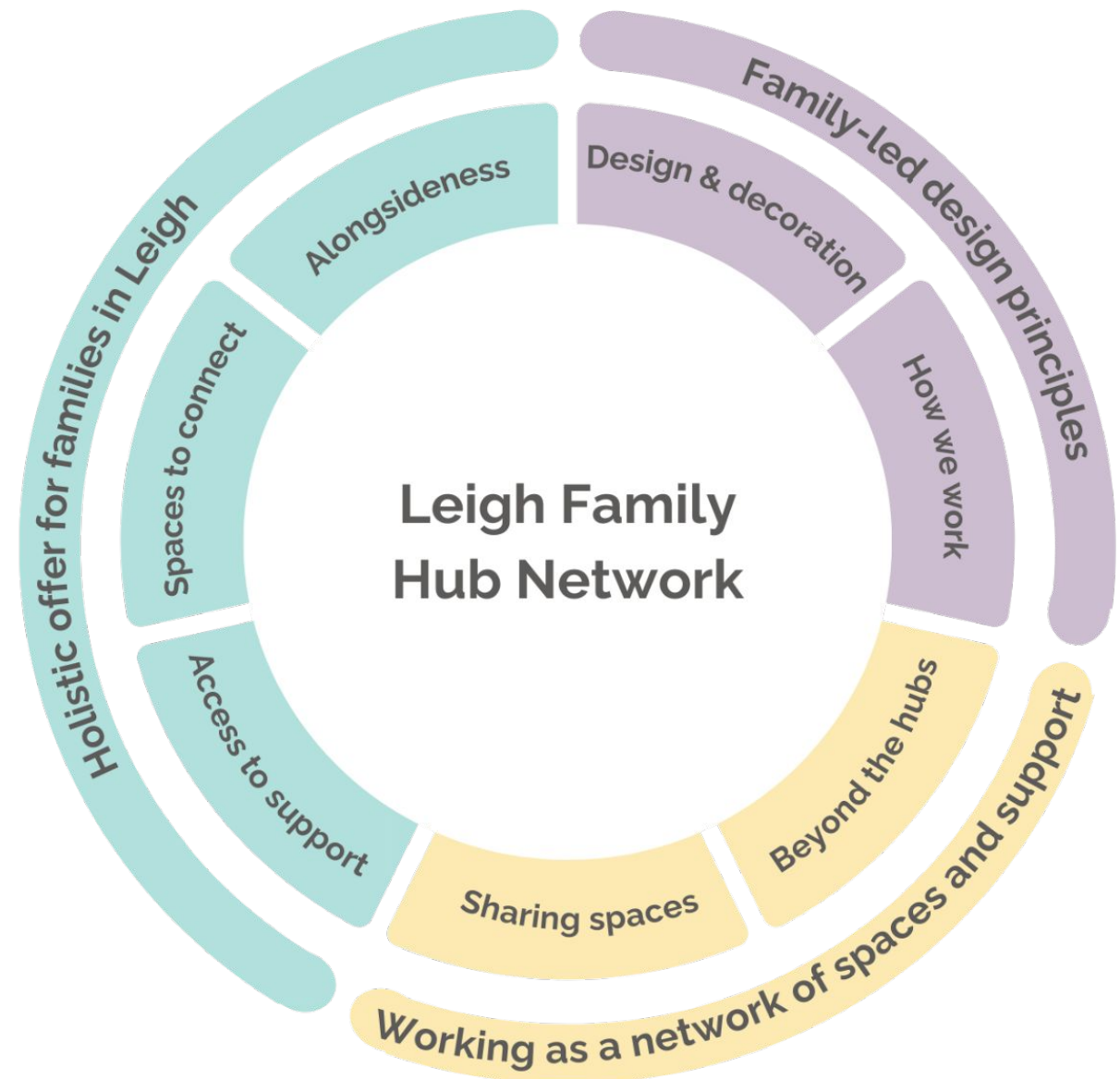
- A need to overcome lack of confidence
- Funding and how it's currently spent
- Wearing multiple hats can be tricky
- Existing power dynamics
- People having their own agendas



Core Features of Leigh Family Hubs

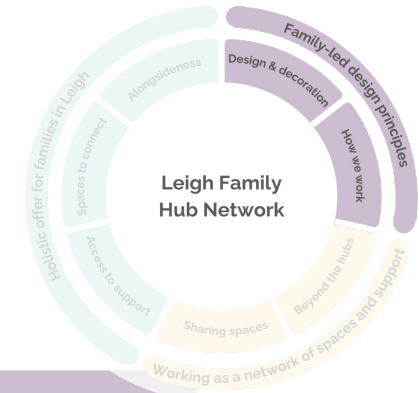
Three core features:

- Family-led design
- Working as a network of spaces and support
- A holistic offer for families in Leigh





Family-led design



Design and decoration

All the hubs are warm, open, and creative spaces where everyone feels welcome.

You'll see: 'living room' style reception areas, maximised use of outdoor spaces, friendly and non-clinical decoration, and space to just be.

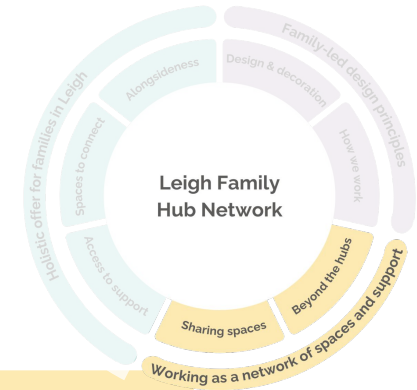
How we work

We value everyone, create good first impressions, and underpin it all with respect.

You'll see: friendly receptionists who can help guide you, staff who prioritise relationships, and families always being welcomed for a brew.



Working as a network of spaces and support



Sharing spaces

We share our spaces with anyone who wants to help families and offering what families want and need.

You'll see: a community-led offer that focuses on joyful activities (regular sessions and parties) with more formal support available too.

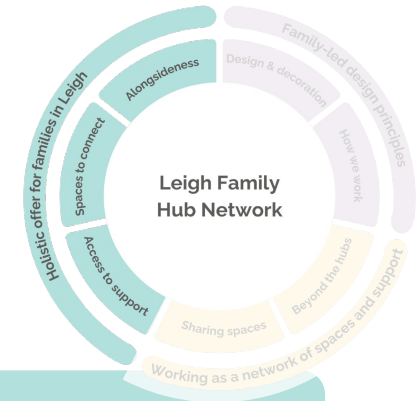
Beyond the hubs

We believe in Leigh. We work together to connect families to the community beyond services.

You'll see: Art and information that celebrates Leigh and collaborative working anchored by the family hub network.



Holistic offer for families in Leigh



Access to support

We offer families the support and services that might help them have better qualities of life.

You'll see: Equity in the offer to families in Leigh family hubs as across Wigan.

Spaces to connect

We foster peer support; bringing families together to create real friendships and grow their networks.

You'll see: Peer groups, peer roles, and sessions to connect families with shared experiences.

Alongside

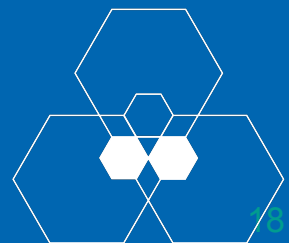
We create space for families to realise their own agency and build the lives that they want to lead.

You'll see: Sessions linked to school pick-up and drop off, 'life admin' drop-ins, and phone charging.

Where next?

The Leigh Family Hub Collaborative is currently planning for a Development Day, inviting a broad range of VCFSE and statutory sector partners, families and young people to develop the offer across the family hub network.

A launch date is planned for July.



Family Welfare
WE LISTEN. WE CARE. WE SUPPORT.

INDEPENDENT MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY

We support people with issues relating to their mental health care. We also help people understand their rights under the Mental Health Act.

WE CAN

- Help you to understand your rights and options.
- Help you access and address issues in decisions about care or treatment.
- Raise anything that you are unhappy with relating to care or treatment.

Ensuring the people we support have their views heard and respected.

Free! ADVOCACY

facebook icon, twitter icon, instagram icon

info@familywelfare.co.uk
01942 847888

Family Welfare
WE LISTEN. WE CARE. WE SUPPORT.

SCHOOLS & COLLEGE COUNSELLING

We provide a safe space within a school or college to support an individual in overcoming their difficulties or concerns.

WE CAN

- Explain thoughts, feelings and emotions with a tailored package.
- Provide a safe space.
- Provide a safe space.

Family Welfare
WE LISTEN. WE CARE. WE SUPPORT.

BEREAVEMENT COUNSELLING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Our counsellors work with children and young people in a sensitive manner to help them to discuss their feelings and worries.

WE CAN

- Provide counselling support.
- Provide counselling support.
- Provide counselling support.

