

National Centre for Family Hubs

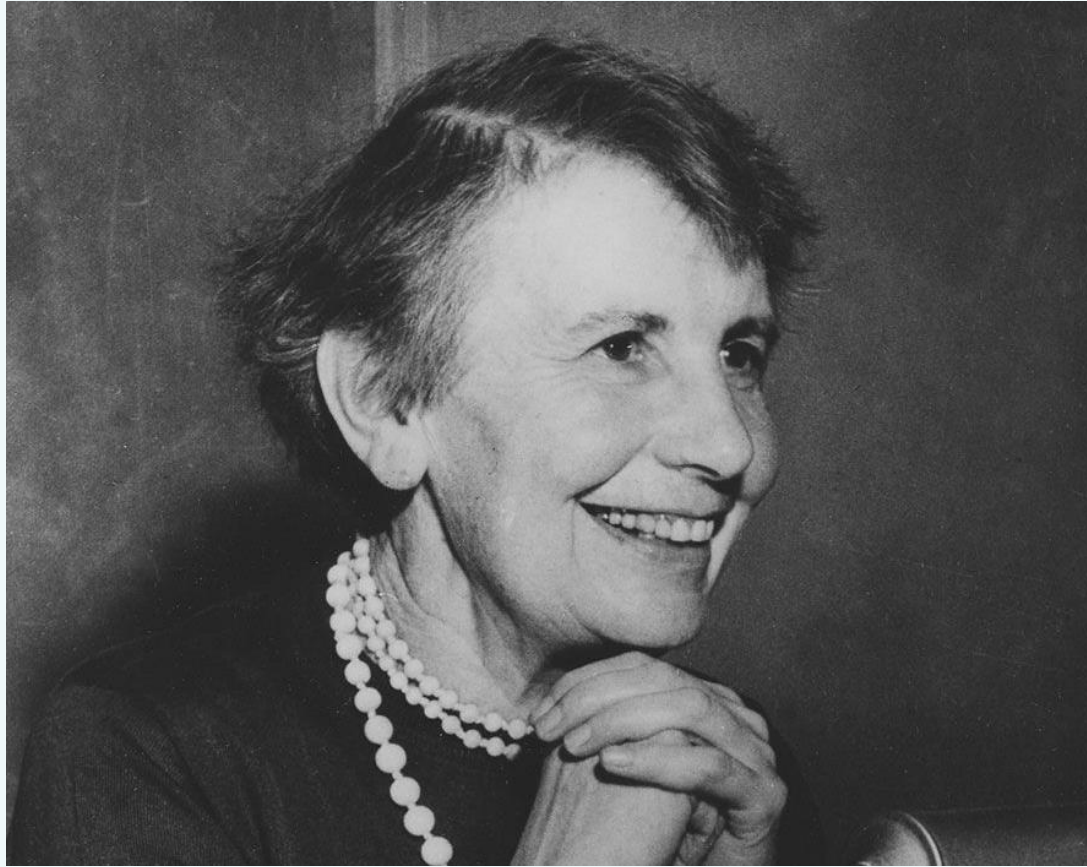
Anna Bedford

Deputy Head of Early Years
and Prevention



Anna Freud
building the mental
wellbeing of the
next generation

Anna Freud



Anna Freud (the centre) has been supporting children and families for over 70 years.

Our vision is a **world where all children and young people are able to achieve their full potential.**

A world in which they and their families get support that is designed with their input, available at the right time, and meets their needs, so that they can development their emotional and mental health.

Our mission is to **close the gap** in wellbeing and mental health by advancing, translating, delivering and sharing the best science and practice with everyone who impacts the lives of children and families.



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National Centre for Family Hubs

NCFH is hosted by the Anna Freud's Early Years and Prevention Department.

We are a national learning platform who works with local authorities, health and voluntary organisations in England to support the design and development of family hubs so that babies, children and their families can access the joined-up, whole family and inclusive support they need to thrive.

We are funded by the Department for Education.



<https://www.nationalcentreforfamilyhubs.org.uk/>

Family Hubs: a system-wide model of providing high-quality, whole-family, joined up family support services



- A Family Hub supports families from **conception**, through the child's early years and **up to the age of 19 (or 25 for young people with special educational needs and disabilities)**.



- Family Hubs provide family support early, when families need it, providing **universal and targeted services**, and access to more intensive support.



- Family Hubs can support **all families**, but it is particularly important that they are designed to be accessible to families **experiencing social or economic disadvantage** or those from **minoritised groups** who experience exclusion.



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Family Hub Principles

Access

Family Hubs are a clear, simple point of access for help and support.

Connection

The purpose of a hub is connection - Services, professionals & sectors working together

Relationships

A family hub means a family focus; relationships are the key - building on family strengths



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NCFH Approach - “Mentalization”



Our work is informed by mentalization, a concept rooted in **attachment theory**.

Mentalizing is the human capacity for making sense of oneself and others by imagining what might be going on for someone underneath the behaviours we see on the surface. We can mentalize at an individual level as well as a systemic level.

This means that as well as informing our direct work with families, mentalization is helpful in supporting multi-agency teams to work together in complex networks.

A core component of mentalizing is cultivating **trust** through **relationships** so that individuals and teams can create cultures of reflection, learning and adaptation.



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Family Hub and Start for Life Programme

“The needs of each community will be different, and therefore you and your delivery partners should assess the needs of babies, children, young people, parents-to-be, parents, carers and families to determine what your local family hub model should look like, where hubs will be located and whether services beyond the core service offer might be needed.

Co-production with families, including Parent and Carer Panels for the Start for Life period, will help shape the local offer in family hub models and hold you to account for delivering and continuously improving the services families want and need.” (DfE, 2022)

There is specific emphasis on **increasing perinatal support** for fathers and co-parents and expanding peer support offer to fathers.



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Practice Spotlight: Norfolk

‘Wellbeing fund for new fathers and fathers to be’

Norfolk County Council identified £140,000 from Family Hubs and Start for Life transformation funding to equip VCSE organisations to support the wellbeing of fathers across the region. The funding aimed to support projects that:

- improve perinatal mental health and support services for fathers
- increase opportunities to build strong father-infant relationships

Fathers on the parent and carer panel were involved in all aspects of the project from assessing the bids to awarding the grants to local organisations.

The funded projects offer a wide range of activities including expectant fathers’ courses, arts and culture, creative play, football clubs, breakfast clubs, gardening, and singing and walking clubs.



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“This fund represents a great opportunity to engage dads both with and without their children. Too many fathers feel isolated or overwhelmed without a safe outlet or support network and far, far too many fathers suffer in silence. I really hope that projects supported by this fund can have a long-lasting impact on the wellbeing of dads across Norfolk. It has been a real privilege to work alongside the Start for Life team as part of the Norfolk Parent and Carer Panel helping to shape this fund, giving it the best opportunity to reach those projects who will have the biggest impact.” Chris - Father from Norfolk Parent and Carer panel

More information on the project can be found [here](#).



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