

Families First Partnership

Threshold Decision Support Tool - January Update

Progress so far

Over recent months, strong progress has continued to be made in developing a shared **Threshold Tool and Document** which has been co-produced with children, young people, parents, carers, and professionals across Cheshire, Merseyside, and the wider North West partnerships.

Our shared aim:

"To improve how family support and safeguarding decisions are explained, experienced and made."

Highlights include:

- A theory of change session with Cheshire and Merseyside Leads.
- Insight from nearly 1,000 contributors (children, young people, parents/carers, practitioners and leaders).
- 4 Children and families co production Hackathons shaping tools and language for better conversations.

What's next (Jan 26)

New Safeguarding Conversation Tool (Prototype)

- Moves away from traditional "threshold" language
- Uses a battery-style model to support clearer and calm conversations
- Focuses on:
 - what's going on in a child and family's world
 - what's helping
 - what's influencing capacity to meet the child's need / protect them from harm
 - what would help next (families first focus)

This will be designed as a **thinking and conversation aid**, not a scoring or eligibility tool, facilitating a needs lead decision.

North West Language Charter

- A shared commitment to clear, kind, and consistent language.

- Sets out language we will always/never use and what safeguarding conversations should *feel like* for families and professionals.

Battery Pack Language Lab

- Shows how the Language Charter applies in practice when using the conversation tool.
- Includes professional language commitments, family-facing expectations and rights, supervision and quality prompts.

Next Steps

- Task & Finish Group to prototype testing and refinements.
- Young people's video messaging explaining:
 - what safeguarding language and "thresholds" feel like from their perspective
 - what's been built through the Hackathons
 - why these tools and the Language Charter matter
 - what happens next

Timeline

- **January-February:** Wider testing and feedback across the region
- **March:** Refinement and agreement on adoption