Family Context

An overview and guide to implementation in your local authority V1.0

INTRODUCTION

This guide is for local authorities. It will help you understand Family Context and whether the tool could work for you. The guide introduces Family Context and outlines what needs to be in place to successfully implement the solution. It also offers insights from local authorities which have already implemented Family Context, and links to reusable materials on our private beta GitHub repository.

Family Context is a tool that allows social workers to easily access service involvement information on relevant individuals to a child. Its purpose is to facilitate conversations with lead practitioners from other services, so that social workers can better support families and safeguard children.

Family Context is technology and practice model agnostic. It offers an open-source reference API, reference user interface, and reference Data Protection Impact Assessment among other materials, but local authorities may adopt an implementation approach which suits their context. For example,

- Stockport has implemented the reference API and reference user interface with only minor customisation;
- Leeds has leveraged the reference materials to create a very similar user experience in a different technology.

This guide therefore does not specify the implementation itself but rather outlines the steps necessary to prepare for it.

The Family Context team

Family Context has been developed through a partnership between Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government; the Christie Foundation; Leeds City Council; Stockport Council; Manchester City Council; and Social Finance. Further information is available by contacting any of the Family Context team.

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Part 1: An overview of Family Context

1.1 What is Family Context?

The best way to quickly understand Family Context is by viewing our short video demonstration.

Family Context is a tool that allows social workers to easily access service involvement information on relevant individuals to a child. Its purpose is to facilitate conversations with lead practitioners from other services, so that social workers can better support families and safeguard children.

Intended users of Family Context	**Area children's social workers** were identified as the core user of Family Context. The tool has been designed to meet their specific needs **when conducting social work assessments.**
What it does	**Shows whether individuals in the family context have been involved with other services and facilitates conversations** with practitioners from those services by providing contact details and summary service involvement information.
Services included in v1.0	**School, Housing, Police** and **Adult Social Care** were selected for Family Context v1.0. This decision was based on the value these bring to social workers and the feasibility of accessing the information. For a successful launch, we recommend that all the required data fields from at least 3 of these services should be available. Further development of Family Context to include additional services is expected to be a collaborative effort in line with the Family Context charter.
Nature of information shown	**Service involvement information and contact details to enable conversations.** This is displayed through two stages in the tool: 1. A closed view: a flag indicates whether records have been found for the individual in a particular service 2. An expanded view: this shows further detail including the date of the individual's involvement, the nature of their involvement and contact details of practitioners from that service

1.2 The problem Family Context tackles and the difference it makes

The problem: When social workers first interact with a child and their family, they do not have easy access to all the information that is relevant to their assessment.

The major consequences of this are:

- Social workers sometimes have incomplete information which can change decisions and outcomes
- Social workers miss valuable opportunities to coordinate support across services
- Social workers waste time looking for service involvement information when they would prefer to spend that time supporting families

"Poor information sharing between multi-agency partnerships has been identified as a compounding factor that can lead to the serious harm, abuse or death of a child."
(DfE 2016)

The solution: Family Context addresses this problem by providing social workers information on relevant individuals to a case and their interactions with key services. This enables conversations with practitioners from other services who know the family, so that social workers can make more informed assessments of safeguarding risks and can better support children and their families.

The direct benefits of this to social workers are:

- Social workers save time chasing information and spend more time supporting the family.
- Social workers build a more complete picture of the family's needs and risks and therefore make more informed decisions.
- Multi-agency working strengthens as social workers do more joint work with other services.

"One piece of information can change the decision for a family"
(Chief Social Worker)

The impact: Children and families should experience better long-term outcomes as children and families receive better support earlier, and more young people are well looked after by their families and fewer end up in care. This also means local authorities avoid families escalating unnecessarily to higher intensity and costlier support.

For more information on the expected short-term and long-term benefits of the tool please see the business case prepared during private beta.

1.3 The Family Context charter

At the time of embarking on the Family Context journey, all partners committed to a way of working which takes inspiration from the Local Digital Declaration. Here we explain how we have worked to date:

Our way of working

- We are **user-led** so that Family Context meets a real user need effectively. Area social workers have been a guiding voice throughout the development of Family Context through multiple rounds of user research. We have also conducted research with residents who have previously experienced children's social care to ensure we are capturing their voice. Findings from user research, and the evolution of Family Context in response to these findings, are captured in our user research reports from private beta, alpha and discovery.

- We **open-source** as much as possible so that it is easy for a new local authority to reuse our work. We have done this by publishing to GitHub outputs and reusable materials from private beta, as well as alpha and discovery.

- We **focus on outcomes** so that our priorities for future development are set according to where Family Context can grow to offer children and families better futures. When we defined the core user and the services included in the MVP, our decisions were based on an evaluation of where the tool could add the most value.

- We **raise awareness of our work** so that others hear about it and can get involved, amplifying our impact. We do this by publishing progress updates on pipeline, promoting our blog on social media, and speaking at conferences such as ShareDigital.

- We **collaborate across councils** so that we can move forward together, learn from each other's approach and build cross-council connections in different disciplines (for example, information governance, or business intelligence). We do this through weekly working sessions with the core project team from each participating local authority where we generate ideas to unblock progress together, and through show and tells, and multi-local authority workshops to validate findings and decisions.

- We **gather evidence** to inform the evolution of Family Context. Evidence we have gathered on time savings, for example, has directly informed the business case for alpha and private beta. Our work to gather evidence on the impact the tool delivers will inform the focus for further development.

- We **follow the GDS agile approach** as much as possible so that we can quickly adapt and iterate Family Context as we learn while we're building the service. As well as running discovery, alpha and private beta phases, we have used agile methods to collaborate, plan and build. We run show and tells and retrospectives, and during the development of the user interface we prioritised user stories on Jira, ran daily stand-ups and had a project team slack channel.

In the coming months, the partners intend to cement our way of working by agreeing a **Family Context charter**. Our ambition is for Family Context to be implemented in other local authorities in order to tackle the problem at a national level. We intend to invite all current and new local authority partners to commit to the Family Context charter once it is agreed.

Part 2: Is Family Context right for our local authority?

2.1 Foundations for successful implementation

Before committing to implementing Family Context, we recommend working with relevant stakeholders and data owners to explore whether Family Context makes sense for your local authority. The checklist below outlines the foundations we recommend are in place before committing resources to implementation:

Conduct research to understand user need

- ☐ Validate that there is a need among social workers that could be met by Family Context

Identify, and secure support of senior sponsors from the following disciplines, which would form part of a core implementation team

- ☐ Children's Social Care
- ☐ Data and technical solutions
- ☐ Information Governance

Determine whether basic conditions are right for implementation

- ☐ Area social work teams have a stable operating environment and capacity to test and adopt a new tool and minor changes in their workflow
- ☐ The local authority has data management infrastructure which facilitates the implementation: a master data management system which may already aggregate some of the data included in Family Context or API access to relevant source data systems; and some ability to match individuals across different datasets
- ☐ The technology lead has a high-level understanding of Family Context, does not see major barriers to implementation, and has appetite to support implementation and ongoing maintenance of the tool
- ☐ The information governance lead has a high-level understanding of the sharing of data facilitated by Family Context, is aware of the legal bases for this data sharing, and has appetite to support the implementation
- ☐ All disciplines are willing and able to commit resource from their areas to a multidisciplinary project team to lead the implementation, and project management resource is available to coordinate the team

Identify, and secure indicative support from the owners of each of the data sets included in Family Context

- ☐ Children's Social Care
- ☐ School
- ☐ Adult Social Care
- ☐ Housing
- ☐ Police

Commit to the Family Context charter

- ☐ The local authority and project sponsors are willing to contribute to the ongoing development of Family Context by sharing learnings and open sourcing materials

Part 3: Preparing for Implementation

3.1 Indicative project team

Preparing to implement Family Context requires a multi-disciplinary core team with a strong project manager, a committed project sponsor within each discipline (information governance, technical, service) and within each data source, as well as social workers for user research. In our experience skills needed in the core team include:

PROJECT **Project lead,** able to bring together multiple perspectives and define the path forward, and to represent this pioneering project in conversations with other stakeholders, alongside the project sponsor where appropriate. This person needs to drive progress, so is important they have the authority and practical ability to pull on the other team members and project sponsors as needed.

IG **Information governance lead**, able to prepare and maintain a DPIA, work with IG counterparts (internal & external) at the other data sources to agree information sharing, and contribute the IG perspective to conversations on the appropriate user journey and appropriate usage of Family Context.

TECH **Technical solution lead with support from team members including BI and/or data specialists**, together able to manage due diligence on the data to be shared, work with technical and data counterparts at both internal and external data sources to agree process for data sharing, and contribute the technical and data perspective to conversations on the appropriate user journey and appropriate usage of Family Context. The technical solution lead will also lead the work to define the implementation roadmap.

SERVICE **Senior service lead with support from those closer to practice (e.g. area social work team managers),** together can enable access to social workers for user research, contribute service leadership's perspective to conversations on the appropriate user journey and on the appropriate usage of Family Context.

USER RESEARCHER **User research lead**, able to capture the perspective of social workers who will use the tool day to day and bring this to conversations on the appropriate user journey and appropriate usage of Family Context.

For the implementation itself, developer skills will be required, however in preparing for implementation we assume here that the technical lead can plan sufficiently well without a developer in the team.

3.2 Indicative project plan

The chart below outlines the workstreams required to prepare for implementation. The phasing is indicative but aims to show recommended sequencing and comparatively how long they are expected to take. Please note this chart assumes a project team as described above with adequate time to drive the project forward.

At the end of the work to prepare for implementation, we recommend a check point. Our advice is that the project should only proceed to implementation if these workstreams are complete. In our experience, proceeding to implement Family Context without having completed some of these workstreams in full is possible, but introduces risk that it is inadvisable to launch Family Context even once built locally. For example:

- not having complete and quality data on at least three of the services would mean that it is inadvisable to launch Family Context to social workers, because it risks not adding enough value to for them to adopt it.
- a lack of consensus and agreement on the appropriate usage of the tool across the service and information governance would mean it is inadvisable to launch Family Context to social workers, because launching it without providing adequate training and guidance will leave them with unanswered questions on what is appropriate.

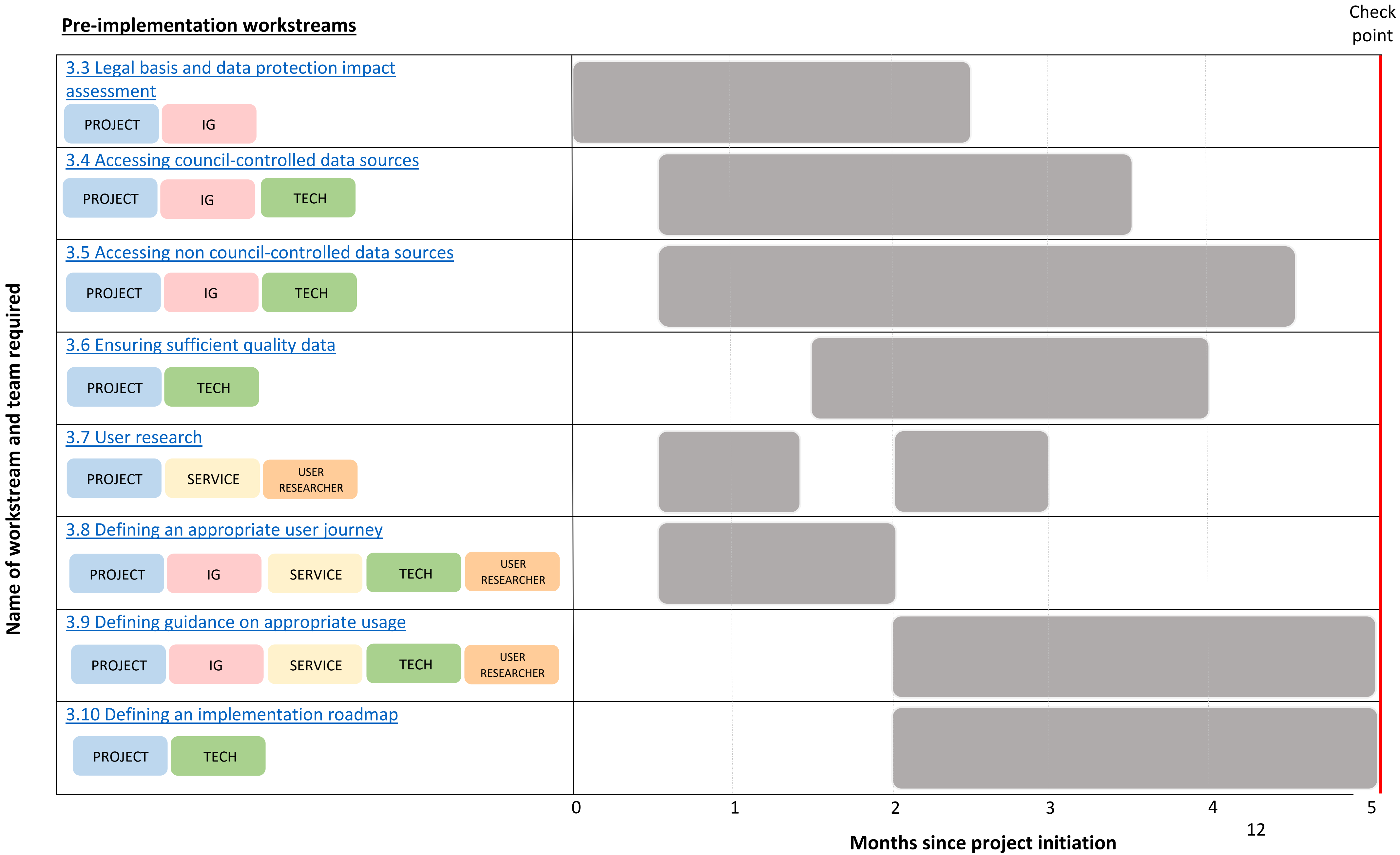
Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Leeds City Council

STOCKPORT Metropolitan Borough Council

SOCIAL FINANCE

Pre-implementation workstreams



3.3 Legal basis and data protection impact assessment

The support of Information Governance for the implementation of Family Context is critical for the project's success.

Key milestones in this workstream:

A. Initiate and update a Data Protection Impact Assessment
B. Secure sign-off for the Data Protection Impact Assessment

During the earlier exploratory work, the Information Governance lead on the project team should have:

- Reviewed the video demonstration of Family Context.
- Reviewed the Reference DPIA to understand the legal basis for data sharing in Family Context.
- Expressed support for the implementation of Family Context.

A. Initiate and update a Data Protection Impact Assessment
Social Finance consulted The Information Commissioners office (ICO) in the very early stages of the Family Context project. Ongoing engagement over the subsequent months has enabled the ICO to offer its advice and support in taking this important work forward.

Social Finance has taken account of comments and advice provided by the ICO in drafting a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) for the project. However, the ICO retains its independence as the regulator responsible for data protection, and local authorities remain accountable for their own compliance with the relevant legislation.

Each local authority must initiate and maintain a DPIA when implementing Family Context. For this we recommend:

- Acknowledging the ICO's guidance around a DPIA framework.
- Reviewing and, where possible, reusing the Reference DPIA (word version). Social Finance has taken account of comments and advice provided by the ICO in drafting this Reference DPIA.
- Staying close to discussions on other workstreams to ensure the decisions on local implementation and the DPIA move in alignment.

B. Secure sign-off for the Data Protection Impact Assessment
We recommend that sign-off is finalised once the other workstreams are largely complete. In particular, once the project team have defined the appropriate user journey and the appropriate usage of Family Context.

Stockport case study on legal basis and DPIA

What worked well

- *Engaging the IG team early and working together to achieve the desired outcome, ensuring all paperwork was completed correctly.*
- *Engaging Information Asset Owners (IAOs) early too – explaining the benefits and the impact of the tool.*
- *Allowing sufficient time to do this (several weeks).*

What were the key challenges?

- *In the discovery and alpha stages, as we piloted new approaches, there were fewer risks and challenges. However, as we entered the beta phase the potential IG risks increased resulting in additional time required for the IG aspects.*

3.4 Accessing council-controlled data sources

Family Context 1.0 contains data from Adult Social Care, Housing, Police and School. Of these data sources, Adult Social Care and School are typically council-controlled datasets.

Key milestones in this workstream:

- **A.** Reach an agreement with each data owner for data to be shared
- **B.** Reach an agreement on what fields should be used to populate the Family Context common data model
- **C.** Reach an agreement on how to feed into 3.10 Defining Implementation Roadmap

During the earlier exploratory work described in 2.1 Foundations for successful implementation, the owners of each data source should have been identified and their indicative support for Family Context secured.

A. Reach an agreement with each council-controlled data source for data to be shared
The project team, with significant support from the information governance lead, should:

- Get key decision makers' support to proceed with work on agreeing fields to be shared. Useful resources for presenting Family Context include the video demonstration of the tool and the justifications for service involvement information being shown in the tool.
- Identify the internal information governance representative for the service and with them draft a data sharing agreement.
- Finalise the data sharing agreement(s) and receive final sign off from key decision makers. Note it is likely that a final agreement won't be secured until milestone B has been met because the decision maker will want to know exactly which of their data is to be shared.

B. Reach an agreement on the fields to populate the Family Context common data model
The project team and technical lead will need to work closely with contacts in each service to:

- Identify the necessary fields from each data set to populate the common data model.
- Specify cohorts and rules and validate that data quality is sufficient – see workstream 3.6
- Finalise the agreement on fields to populate the common data model

C. Reach an agreement on how to feed into 3.10 Defining Implementation Roadmap
Representatives from the data sources may want to help shape the Family Context implementation roadmap. We suggest the following steps:

- Identify any key individuals for implementation of data sharing (if different to the project team).
- Decide with those key individuals how they should be involved in defining the implementation roadmap (if necessary).

3.5 Accessing non council-controlled data sources

Housing and Police (i.e. the other data sources contained in the Family Context 1.0) tend to be non council-controlled datasets. Consequently, the process for gaining access to these datasets is similar but has some additional steps and, in our experience, requires extra effort.

Key milestones in this workstream:

- **A.** Reach an agreement with each data source for data to be shared
- **B.** Reach an agreement on what fields should be used to populate the Family Context common data model
- **C.** Reach an agreement on how to feed into 3.10 Defining Implementation Roadmap

During the earlier exploratory work, the owners of each data source should have been identified and their indicative support for Family Context secured.

A. Reach an agreement with each data source for data to be shared

The project team, with significant support from the information governance lead, should:

- Get the key decision makers' support to proceed with work on agreeing fields to be shared. Useful resources for presenting Family Context include the video demonstration of the tool and the justifications for service involvement information being shown in the tool.
- Identify the external information governance representative for the service and support them to develop their own Data Protection Impact Assessment.
- Draft a data sharing agreement with each service.
- Finalise the data sharing agreement and receive final sign off from key decision makers. Note it is likely that a final agreement won't be secured until milestones B and C have been met because the decision maker and information governance representative will want to know exactly which of their data is to be shared, and how.

B. Reach an agreement on the fields to populate the Family Context common data model

The project team and technical lead will need to work closely with contacts at each data source to:

- Identify the necessary fields from each data set to populate the common data model. Typically this is best done with a BI/Data Manager who knows the database schemas and any data issues well.
- Specify cohorts and rules and validate that data quality is sufficient – see workstream 3.6.
- Finalise the agreement on fields to populate the common data model.

C. Reach an agreement on how to feed into 3.10 Defining Implementation Roadmap

It is important for the project team to gain an understanding of how the data will be accessed. To do this, we suggest the following steps:

- Identify the external technical representative to support with the process for sharing data.
- Present the project objectives and set out any data source-specific questions relating to the implementation. This should include understanding whether their data is already shared with other systems/partners through a process which we may be able to leverage; and understanding the internal roadmap for their data infrastructure (e.g. are there any plans on moving to a new system in the short, medium or long term) to ensure any process explored is future proof.
- Understand how the external technical representative should be involved in ongoing work in workstream 3.10 Defining the implementation roadmap, where options for data flow will be analysed and the most appropriate and secure method for sharing data can be agreed and the implementation planned.

Leeds case study on accessing data sources

What worked well?

- *Confirming the right champions from the relevant areas helped to accelerate the process.*
- *Taking the time to explain the background, the reason for sharing data, and how it would be used for safeguarding made the data owners more comfortable with the proposal.*
- *It promoted joint working across different directorates – we were asked what we can share with them!*

What were the key challenges?

- *There was a lack of visibility of champions from Social Care SLT, which meant their involvement in the high-level decisions was limited. We overcame this by involving members of staff that weren't working in those service areas.*
- *It was difficult to identify the relevant parties and get them to understand things such as what data is being surfaced, how secure access to the system will be, and who will be able to access the data. We overcame this by having direct meetings with data owners/BI staff; and if we were to do this again, we would do this as a larger meeting rather than separately with each directorate.*
- *Information Governance (IG) discussions started too late in the process. All the IG discussions should take place before the development of the technical solution starts. Instead, we had to overcome this by working on IG areas alongside technical and data discussions.*
- *The project team had to be assembled quickly given the tight timescales, which meant people also had their day-to-day work. To overcome this, members of staff did additional work to progress this project.*

Stockport case study on accessing data sources

What worked well?

- *Having a Master Data Management solution (Enterprise Data Warehouse) already in place helped a great deal. It allowed us to bring together and match disparate datasets more easily, and reduce the amount of manual effort required.*
- *Existing working relationships with external partners helped to speed up the process. We knew which individuals to speak to, and there was already an element of trust from previous experiences of data sharing.*
- *Utilising our automation software to automate data extraction and blending.*

What were the key challenges?

- *We have been unable to access Police data, but talks are still underway and we hope to have access to this data in the future. We are learning from another local authority that has had more success as to how best approach this.*

PROJECT TECH

3.6 Ensuring sufficient data quality

The value of Family Context to social workers is largely defined by the quality of the data that sits within it. The completion of this workstream helps to ensure that social workers are presented with reliable, complete and up-to-date data in the tool. To get to a good outcome, someone who understands Family Context well will need to collaborate with someone who knows the data well.

Key milestones in this workstream:

A. Complete due diligence on the data

B. Confirm data quality is sufficient

A. Complete due diligence on the data

These checks should be carried out in parallel with workstreams 3.4 and 3.5. We recommend the project team:

- Review the data quality checklists used in Leeds and Stockport, adding any additional questions:
    - Adult Social Care
    - Housing
    - Police
    - School
- Identify a representative from each service who knows their underlying database schema and any known issues and is willing and able to support this due diligence.
- Work with the representative to identify the cohort of people on which data should be shared. For example, during discussions with Adult Social Care in Leeds it was agreed that data should be shared on any individual that currently has, or has had, a support plan within the given time period, excluding those with 'planned' or 'cancelled' plans as these are unlikely to have an assigned practitioner.
- In addition to these decisions on the cohort, there are also age-based rules under which this service involvement information is shown in Family Context for a given individual. Work with the representative to specify the age-based rules which determine whether the service will be shown for a given individual in Family Context in your area, with reference to our decisions on Stockport rules for showing service involvement information.
- Support the representative to complete the data quality checklist for their service

B. Confirm data quality is sufficient

Sufficient quality data is required in order to match individuals across datasets using their basic details, and to display relevant service involvement information about them. The following steps should be taken to work towards this:

- Review and capture the results from each data quality check.
- Identify areas where the quality of the data is undetermined or needs to be improved.
- Take the necessary measures to ensure all fields are of sufficient quality.

Leeds case study on ensuring sufficient data quality

What worked well?

- *Confirming the right champions from the relevant areas helped to accelerate the process.*
- *Social Finance had direct discussion with BI/data managers once they had run the reports to clarify any queries and make amendments.*
- *It promoted joint working across different directorates and with Social Finance.*

What were the key challenges?

- *Understanding the timespan of the data quality checks. Once this was agreed, it was easier for the data quality scripts to be run for the data that we would be using for Family Context.*

Stockport case study on ensuring sufficient data quality

What worked well?

- *We were fortunate that Adult Social Care data in the council had recently undergone a cleaning exercise as part of a large system implementation. This meant that the BI developers who worked on the system implementation held valuable domain knowledge.*
- *Our internal data quality initiatives mean some practices beyond the Family Context-specific checks have been beneficial. For example, as part of the extraction of data, we run data quality checks on the data including row counts and user acceptance testing. We also provide evidence of poor data quality to share with services throughout the year.*

What were the key challenges?

- *It can be difficult to ensure that services take ownership of their data; however, we have engaged with them to explain the impact of poor quality data. For example, we are currently investigating how to run statutory returns throughout the year to highlight data quality issues alongside existing data quality reporting.*

Social Finance observations on ensuring sufficient data quality

What worked well?

- *Leveraging the knowledge of the analysts from each data source to prevent issues arising at a later point. For example, one of the Adult Social Care analysts informed us that their local authority had changed Case Management Systems 5 years ago. As a result, they suggested doing two tranches of data quality checks to see if the quality of the data varied significantly when covering a period of 10 years in comparison to 5 years.*

What were the key challenges?

- *Areas where the quality of the data was insufficient for the purpose of the tool. For example, the Adult Social Care data quality check showed that the contact's email address was absent in >50% of records. We overcame this by cross referencing with the council's active directory which holds 100% of email addresses for these workers.*

PROJECT SERVICE USER RESEARCHER

3.7 User research

Each local authority should conduct user research to ensure that the tool is well aligned to their social work practice and their social workers' needs. For this, we recommend two rounds of research to focus on:

(1) learning social workers' preferred user journey and level of comfort in using the tool; and

(2) understanding their response and tolerance towards different data quality issues.

It is not necessary for a local authority to conduct user research around the usability of the tool unless significant changes are made to the reference implementation.

Key milestones in this workstream:

A. Learn social workers' preferred user journey

B. Understand how social workers will respond to any known data quality risks

During the earlier exploratory work outlined in 2.1 Foundations for successful implementation, research should have been conducted to validate there is an unmet user need that can be met by Family Context.

A. Learn social worker's preferred user journey
The first round of user research should take place before a local authority decides which user journey of Family Context to implement as user research findings will inform that decision. Those conducting the user research should take the following steps:

- Review the alternative Family Context user journeys.
- Identify a representative group of social workers to run the user research with based on the criteria outlined in the private beta user research report.
- Use the round 1 discussion guide, round 1 mock referral and prototypes available to carry out the user research.
- Synthesise and capture findings from the user research.

B. Understand how social workers will respond to any known data quality risks
The second round of user research is best carried out once there is visibility on the results from the data quality checks. This will allow local authorities to test potential data quality issues, and how this would affect social workers' use of the tool. The findings will be important to understand any risks on launching the tool and enable an appropriate response. We suggest the following:

- Review the results from the data quality checks and highlight any potential data quality risks.
- Assemble a discussion guide to focus on such risks, using the round 2 discussion guide for user journey one and the round 2 discussion guide for user journey two as examples of a structure.

- Use the discussion guide created, round 2 mock referral and relevant prototype to conduct the user research.
- Synthesise and capture findings from the user research.

Social Finance observations on user research

What worked well?

- *The willingness and enthusiasm of the teams to support the project and keep it moving. The teams participating in user research made time for sessions and gave honest feedback and valuable insight. As a result, the project team built a good understanding of their perspective on our key questions.*
- *Having the basis of extensive research with area social workers during alpha meant we understood the social workers' workflow and the role-specific language. For a researcher picking this up from scratch, some extra time may be needed (or a pre-round of research) to build that understanding.*

What were the key challenges?

- *Social workers' days are unpredictable and so being prepared for last minute cancellations as emergencies came up is important. We generally booked 1 extra session than our ideal minimum number on any given day in anticipation of one of them not happening.*
- *Giving social workers plenty of notice is also important. We tried to book user research sessions 2-3 weeks in advance.*

3.8 Defining an appropriate user journey

A user journey refers to the path a social worker takes to reach their goal of accessing information on Family Context. In the beta phase of the project, we identified the two simplest potential user journeys. The decision on which of these user journeys to implement has purposely been left to local authorities, so that they can follow the process below to determine what would be most suited to their environment (i.e. their children's social care service, their technical infrastructure, and the availability of data).

Key milestones in this workstream:

A. Understand the different Family Context user journeys

B. Agree the Family Context user journey to be implemented in your local authority

A. Understand the different Family Context user journeys

The project team should build a solid understanding of the different user journeys and the implications of each one. To achieve this, each team member should:

- Review the Family Context user journeys and understand the key differences.
- Answer the framework of questions around the feasibility of each user journey designed to help identify feasible user journey option(s).
- Consider the findings from 3.7 User research on a social workers' preferred user journey.

B. Agree the Family Context user journey to be implemented in your local authority

The project team will play an important role in bringing together any findings and supporting the local authority to come to a decision. We propose they take the following steps:

- Convene the project team to discuss and clarify answers from each discipline's perspective (technical, information governance, service, user research) on the suitability of each user journey.
- Draft a proposal for the appropriate Family Context user journey along with supporting justifications, referencing the user journey choices in Stockport and Leeds.
- Obtain sign-off from senior stakeholders.

Stockport case study on defining an appropriate user journey

What worked well

- *Inclusion of Service lead from the business*
- *Having a social worker embedded in the project team was a huge benefit. This helped speed up decision making.*

What were the key challenges?

- *It is always difficult finding time with social workers as they are doing incredibly important work which can make it difficult to organise. This indirectly affected this workstream because the user research was an input into our understanding of their perspective.*

3.9 Defining guidance on appropriate usage

Family Context should align with a local authority's current social work practice model as much as possible. As part of this, it is important for local authorities to provide social workers with clear guidance on how the tool should be used within their daily practice. It is under these conditions that the adoption of the tool will most likely be successful.

Key milestones in this workstream:

A. Understand current social work practice for conducting assessments

B. Agree guidance on appropriate usage of Family Context in your local authority

A. Understand current social work practice for conducting assessments
In the first instance, the project team should develop an understanding of the current social work practice model by:

- Reviewing any user research findings around how the assessment process works, including how consent is obtained from a family to conduct a children's social work assessment (this is likely to come up during user research although it is not an explicit objective of the rounds outlined in 3.7 User research).
- Holding conversations with service leads and team managers and reviewing existing guidance.
- Collecting and reviewing materials that social workers use when interacting with a family e.g. information sheets and consent forms.

B. Agree guidance on appropriate usage of Family Context in your local authority
Project teams should develop guidance on the appropriate usage of the tool in accordance with the current social work practice model and guidance that already exists. To do this, we suggest that project teams:

- Begin to develop guidance using the skeleton guidance on appropriate usage of Family Context. Consider the key questions on appropriate usage of Family Context provided and add any additional ones in your local authority.
- Facilitate discussions on the skeleton guidance and the key questions with the service lead, information governance lead and user researcher. Their perspectives are needed in order to come to a decision.
- Refine and finalise guidance, including getting the view of a senior individual such as your principal social worker.
- Obtain sign-off from service lead and IG lead on detailed guidance for appropriate usage of Family Context.

Stockport case study on defining guidance on appropriate usage

What worked well

- *Engaging with service managers and principal social worker to agree best approach, that fits with our Stockport Family model. Service manager involvement is really helpful. As part of the project we identified key colleagues to support.*
- *In the beta phase we engaged with a specific social work team; this consistent approach to user research supported defining the appropriate use*
- *Understanding in the wider context of the service and ensuring the same principles are applied.*

Leeds case study on defining guidance on appropriate usage

We have not yet finalised guidance on appropriate usage of Family Context in Leeds, but we can share the approach we're taking:

- *Our intention is to ensure Family Context is not seen as a decision-making tool, and that any time saving benefit for the workers is intended to give them more time with the family and reduce the administrative burden, not reduce the number of social workers.*
- *Reviewing the business process is important to be clear about when and what circumstances are appropriate for the tool to be used*

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Leeds CITY COUNCIL

STOCKPORT METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

SOCIAL FINANCE

PROJECT TECH

3.10 Defining an implementation roadmap

A detailed implementation roadmap will help to ensure that the implementation of Family Context is as smooth as possible. When drafting the roadmap, local authorities should consider how they can make the most of the materials that the Family Context project provides e.g. the reference API and reference user interface in a way that aligns with their internal resources and skills. We suggest reviewing Leeds' approach to the technical development of Family Context and Stockport's approach to technical development.

Ideally, workstreams 3.4 and 3.5 would be largely complete before work on defining an implementation roadmap begins. This ensures that any conceptual challenges with data sharing are resolved and opens the way for these practical conversations on the 'how'.

Key milestones in this workstream:

A. Determine the best technical solution for building the tool

B. Agree the process for building the tool

A. Determine the best technical solution for building the tool

We suggest that the technical lead:

- Maps and discusses options for the front-end implementation including security, hosting and technology. Among the options considered should be an approach which leverages the reference user interface.
- Maps and discusses options for the back-end implementation including data ingest and matching. If an API approach is possible, the reference API should be used. In any case the common data model should be your target data model.
- Assesses different options against strategic priorities and operational considerations. For examples, see Leeds' approach to the technical development of Family Context and Stockport's approach to technical development.

B. Agree the process for building the tool

With the desired technical solution in mind, a local authority should plan the process for building the tool. This includes:

- Proposing an implementation roadmap including the potential timelines and the necessary resources for building the tool.
- Securing necessary signoffs for the proposed implementation road map.

Leeds case study on defining an implementation roadmap

What worked well?

- *Assumptions were made early on that, where appropriate, we would seek to re-use and align with the existing Leeds City Council Infrastructure. Making use of existing platforms meant that we were able to reduce costs and accelerate the process.*
- *Joint working and knowledge sharing across Leeds and Stockport has helped to give different perspectives on the design and build approach. Through this, we've seen some potential solution designs that we may consider for future iterations of the Leeds Family Context tool.*
- *Requirements gathering, data analysis and data modelling work was done in the early discovery phase of the project, which has helped to set the scope for the subsequent technical phase.*

What were the key challenges?

- *Short timescales for designing and building. To overcome this, we ensured that we had a 'decoupled' solution design. This meant that we could develop the front-end and back-end components in parallel to each other. For example, by (i) using dummy data to facilitate the front-end user interface development until the back-end data platform was up and running (ii) Extracting, loading, cleansing and matching each data source independently, so that one data source feed did not have the potential to slow the rest down.*
- *A lack of technical resource and capacity in the technical development teams. To overcome this, we recruited an external developer to work alongside our internal team on the development of the back-end data platform.*
- *There were outstanding information governance issues as discussions with external information governance partners were still taking place in the design and build phase. This meant adjustments had to be made to the original solution design data flows. Our 'decoupled' data source approach helped to overcome this.*

Part 4: Appendices

4.1 Glossary of key terms

Assessment	• Assessments are carried out by social workers to identify the needs of a referred child and to ensure that families are appropriately supported to meet them. Assessments can also be called 'social work assessments' or 'child and family assessments'.
Case Management System	• Social workers use Case Management Systems to collect information on the children and families they support. For example, by recording the case notes from phone calls and visits. • The Children's Services department in Leeds use Mosaic as their Case Management System; while Stockport use LiquidLogic.
Discipline	• This refers to the specialist teams working on the project e.g. Information Governance. A multi-disciplinary team is a team comprising representatives from different specialisms.
Linking	• Most Case Management Systems have a relationships function, where social workers can link relevant individuals to a child. This helps them to build up a general picture of family relationships.
Matching	• A systematic way of matching, combining and comparing information about individuals from multiple data sources.
Referral	• When someone contacts Children's Services to raise a concern over the wellbeing of a child, that contact is recorded and triaged. One possible outcome of the triage is a referral for social work assessment.