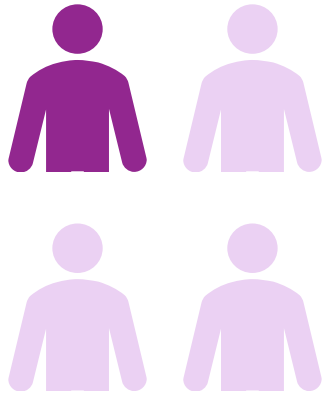


# Brighter Futures



Nationally, approximately **1 in 4 women** are at risk of returning to court for **subsequent care proceedings within 7 years** of their first appearance in care proceedings.



In Leicestershire we see a similar picture. **1 in 4 mothers** who had a child removed in 2023 to date **had already experienced the removal of a child.**

Over the last 4 years this recurrence rate averages 23% or **30 mothers per year.**

Nationally, **60%** of children who appear in a mother's first repeat removal **were under the age of 1.**

Again, we see a similar picture in Leicestershire - **59%** (17) of the 29 children who were removed in a repeat removal to date in 2023 **were under the age of 1 at time of removal.**



# Our Problem

Distrust of professionals is a huge barrier. Staff identified distrust of social workers as the biggest barrier when working families, the second biggest barrier they named was parents fear and negative views from previous experience. Parents reported feeling fearful when they became pregnant again of what would happen. Many felt that their strengths were overlooked and that it was a done deal that their child would be removed.

Parents previous experience means that engagement is really difficult. Staff identified engagement as the third biggest barrier to working with families where a child has been removed.

**Contact**  
Parents described finding contact difficult; our current processes aren't trauma informed.

Parents go unsupported post-removal, feel like they don't matter. In 14 of the 16 interviews, parents said they had no support in the period of time after proceedings to help them cope with:

- Practical aspects.
- Grief of losing a child.
- Their own trauma.
- Understanding the changes they need to make.

**Our approach to pre-births.**  
Pre-birth assessment form is same as a normal assessment form and treated as such. Our current processes and work pressures can mean that pre-birth assessments are not prioritised and so we lose time to work with parents.

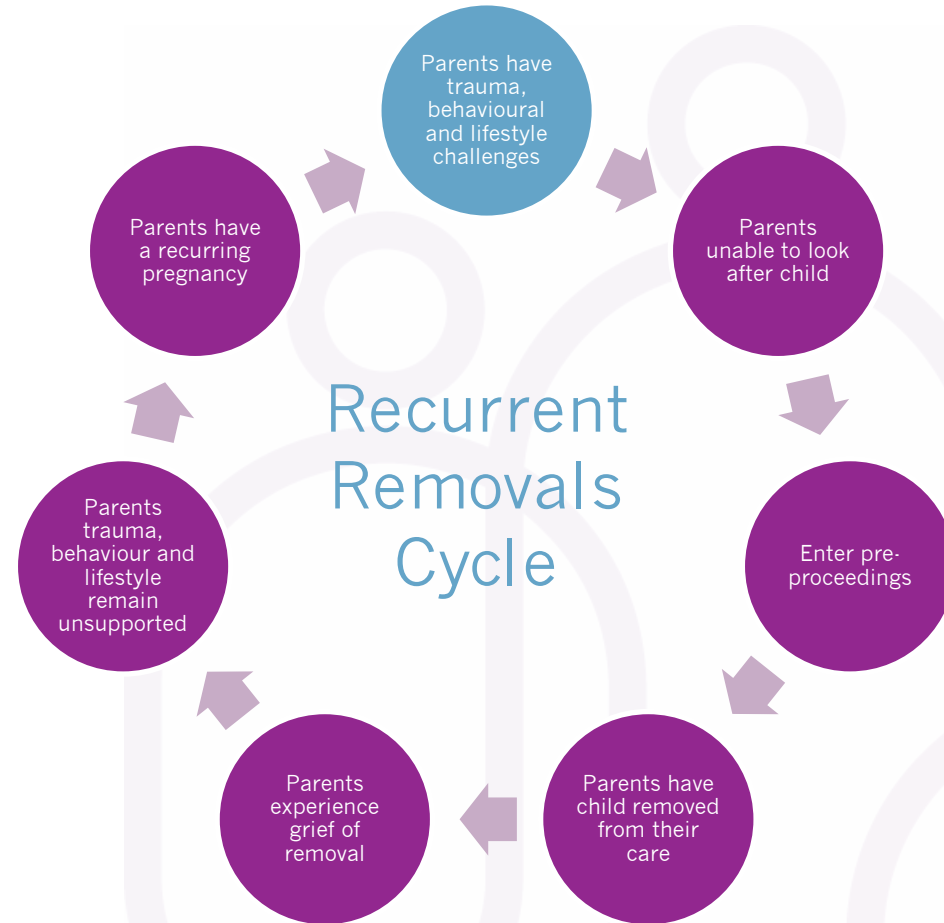
**Our approach to risk.**  
Are our immediate judgements based on history? Process is for parents who have had a child removed to go straight to CP.

**Limitations of our existing offer.**  
Something about CFWS offer - lack of knowledge of the offer. Limitations with providing services during proceedings.

Parents feel isolated and described strain on existing networks and relationships. In 10 of the 16 interviews, parents reported they had nobody close to them they could share things with. In 8 of the 16 parent interviews, parents felt that no one helped them during proceedings.

Parents often don't understand what is happening. In 5 of the interviews parents didn't understand the reason their child was removed - in a further interviews 3 the parents understood now but not at the time (so 50% in total). Parents described confusion with processes. Staff described how parents don't understand processes. Our processes, forms, documents are geared to us rather than the parents.

**Access to services**  
Parents are not always able to access services that they need to make the changes we need them to within the required timeframes.



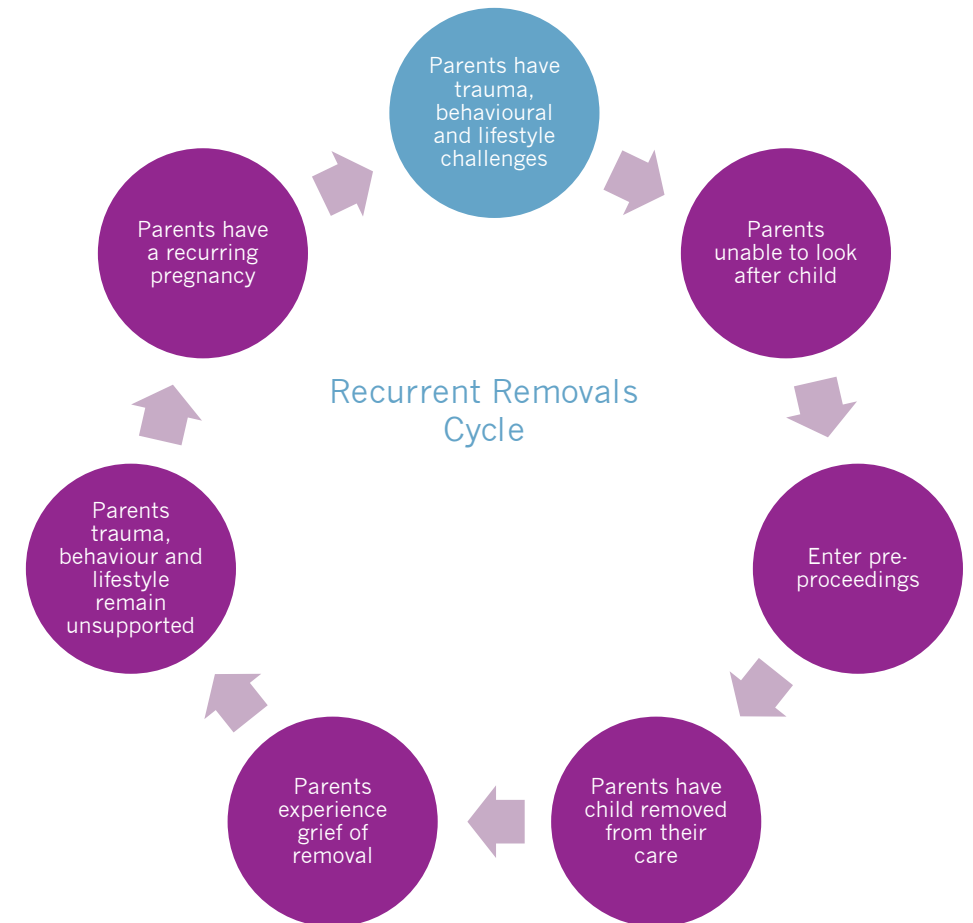
**Our processes around planning for removal and our post-removal processes aren't trauma informed.** Parents described

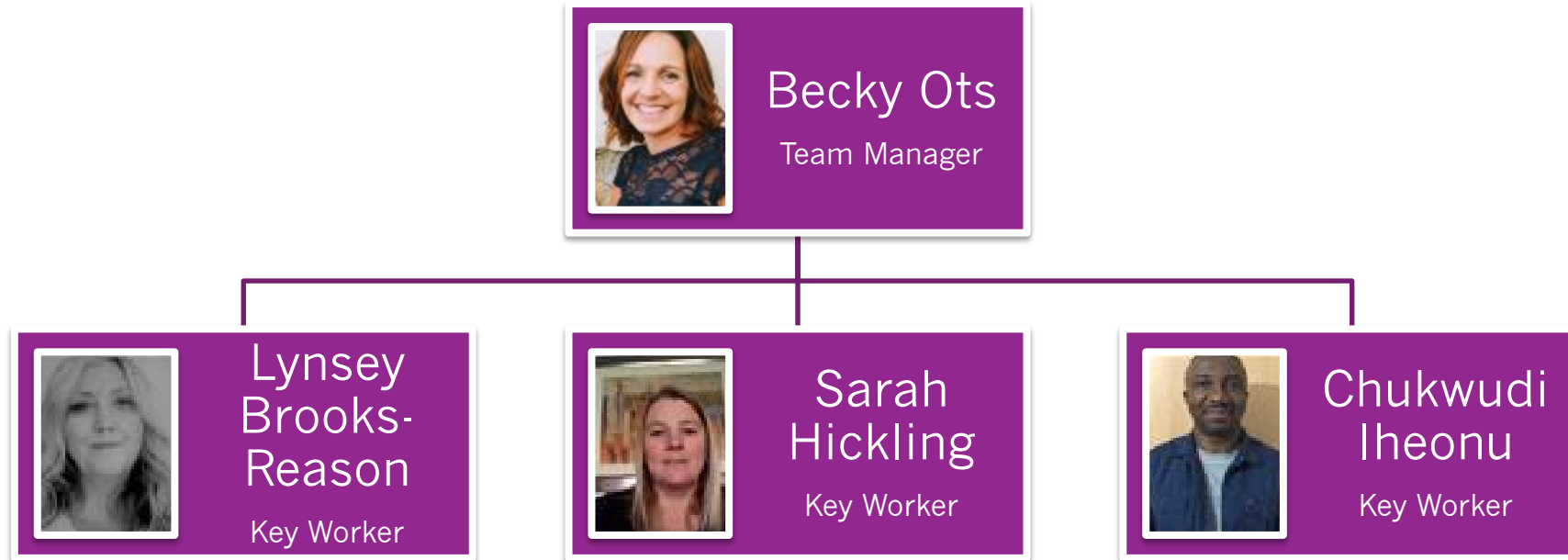
## Brighter Futures –

Supporting the wellbeing of parents who have had children removed and encouraging their next steps and choices.

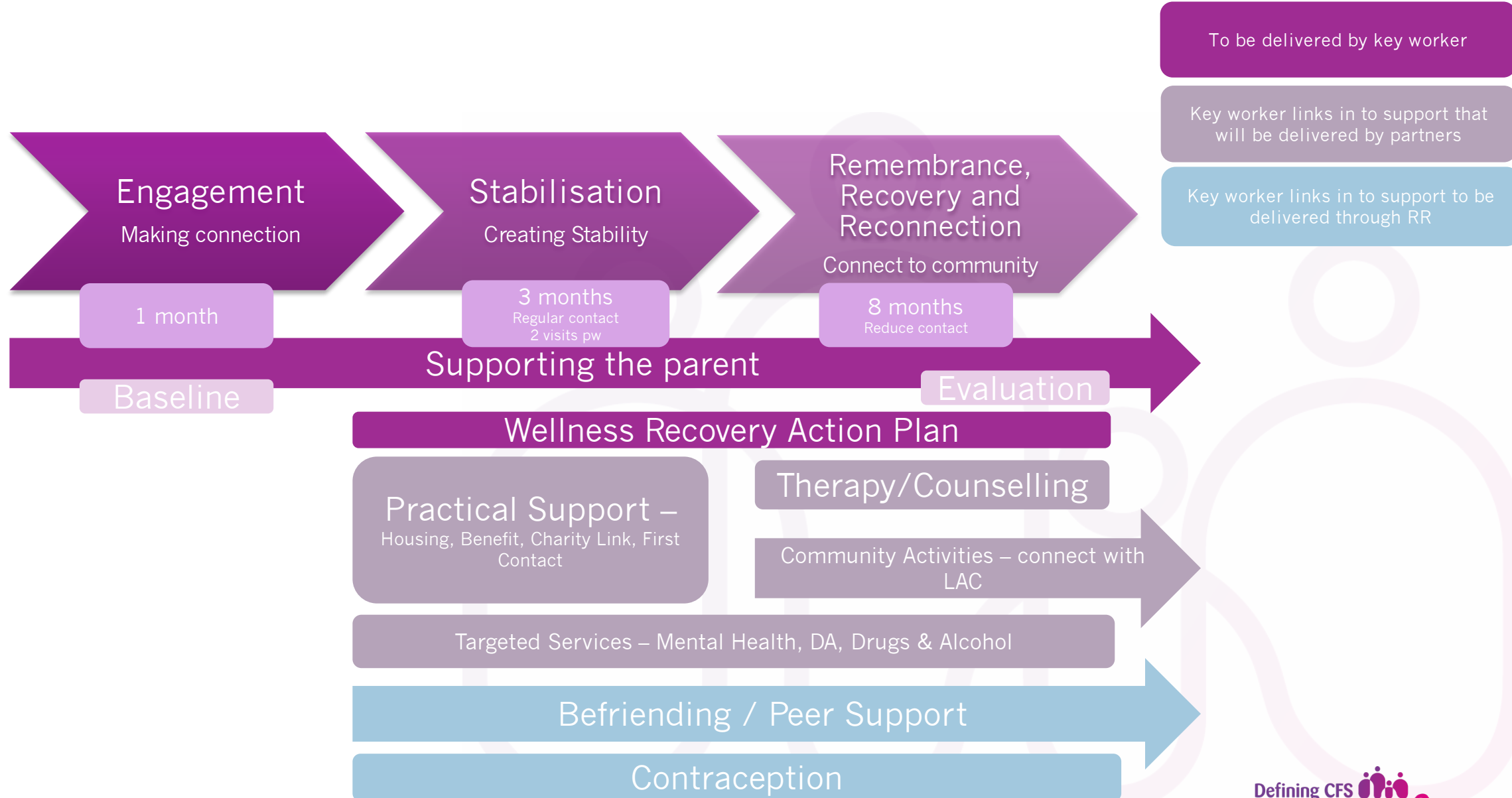
The pathway aims to:

- Extend a 'hand in the dark' to parents, where the sole focus is on them.
- Engage parents and build a connection with them.
- Help parents to feel more stable by supporting them with practical aspects – e.g. housing, benefits.
- Support parents to understand what has happened and their previous trauma.
- Support parents to understand what the future looks like with the child that they have lost, and how to manage that unnatural relationship.
- Support parents with how to cope with feelings of grief and loss of having a child removed from their care.
- Connect parents to targeted support with drugs, alcohol etc
- Support planning for future children.

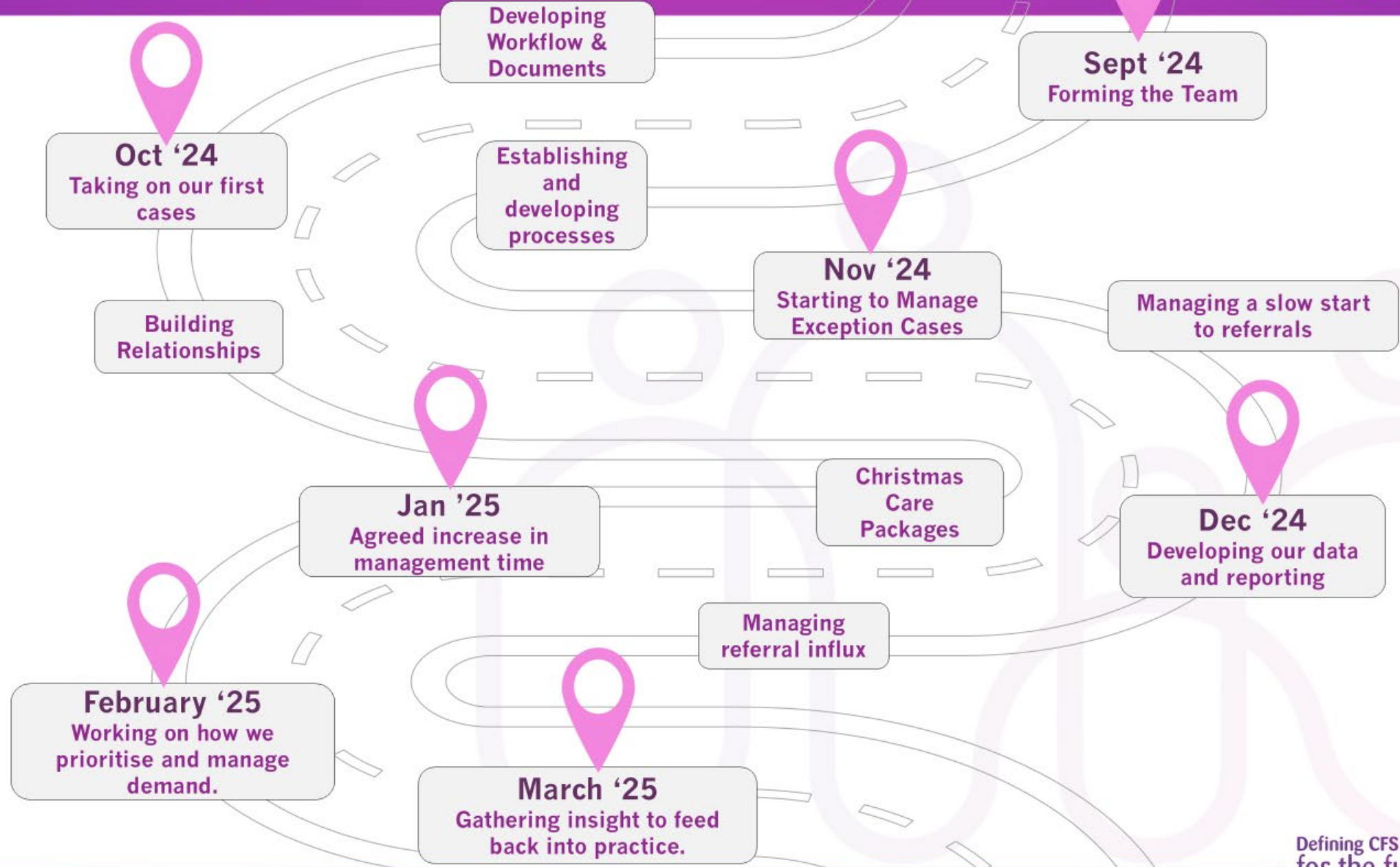




# Our Brighter Futures Service Offer



# Our Journey So Far – Months 1-6



# Parent Voice

*I like you visiting, it's good to have someone to talk to and someone who listens.*

*'No one has ever told me that I have done well'*

*"I'm sorry can I just say something... you're not judgey"*

*Thank you for coming, I want you to keep coming and thank you for all your help, you're a lovely person.*

*My voice would not have been heard as successfully without your support.*

*This support should have been available five years ago when my children were 1st removed*

*"Can you call me. I need your help"*

*Why didn't SW support me to make changes during proceedings when I still had a chance to show that I could have my children in my care'*

*I think what you guys are trying to achieve is amazing and commend you greatly*

*'My voice would not have been heard at my appointment with my GP if you weren't there'*

*"Thank you for coming, I just find trying things hard but can only try my best and do my hardest to stay strong"*

*Don't leave me now keep coming.*



Please contact the Brighter Futures team if you are working with parents...

- ✓ Who have recently had a final court hearing where they have received a permanence decision and the arrangements for the child are
- SGO
  - Care & Placement Order (pre-Adoption Order)
  - Child Arrangement Order

We want to try and work with everybody, however there are some parents who we can't work with:

- ✗ Parents who are pregnant; these parents will be picked up by our pre-birth pathway.

# How to make a referral

Email the Brighter Futures inbox

[brighterfutures@leics.gov.uk](mailto:brighterfutures@leics.gov.uk)

Complete the Brighter Futures Referral form.

The Brighter Futures team will contact you for a case conversation.

