

FORT (August 2020)

What is FORT?

The roll-out of FORT is supported by a partnership between the voluntary sector, Dundee City Council, Health and other partners. Its core purpose is to map services across Dundee and support access to those services by professionals and others seeking to support children and families. Although FORT is now being used more specifically to support distribution of the wellbeing fund it can also be used to seek and request other service supports.

The Support and Connect Dundee website is the “Front Door” for the Fast Online Referral and Tracking (FORT) system. The FORT system will track the various services delivered in support of referrals made from professionals. FORT also allows agencies to securely refer a client to other agencies who may be better placed to deliver a particular service.

Using the directory (created for the system), the Triage Support Team can select from a number of agencies that they feel could resolve the client issue. This is where a professional can refer into the Triage Team (known as blind referral) to seek support for a family but are not sure what service is best suited and available. The receiving agency can then accept the referral and provide the client with help and assistance. If an agency chooses to accept the referral, the referral is then assigned to a member of staff within the organisation. The referral is then tracked until the case is resolved or until it is agreed mutually, that the case is closed.

FORT also gathers anonymised data on referrals and responses and generates monthly reports. Early data on distribution of the welfare fund indicates that the majority of support so far distributed is benefitting children and families in the most deprived areas of Dundee. Other populations benefitting include: children and families experiencing domestic abuse; disability; young people leaving care (16+), etc.,

Adapting around COVID-19

Originally FORT was rolled out in two pilot areas (North East and Lochee) however due to the virus and working in this unpredictable time, FORT has been made available more broadly due to making the Wellbeing Fund accessible.

Barnardo's, Action for Children, One Parent Families, and others are charged by the Scottish Government with ensuring children and families experiencing difficulty as a result of the Corona virus benefit from the monies allocated to the Scottish Wellbeing Fund. Access can be supported by referral or signposting the relevant support for children and families, and is currently being used by professionals in social work, education and third sector agencies

The Wellbeing Fund is currently open to all young people, children and families across Dundee, where a financial need is identified. This can include food, electricity, gas, resources for the children, and capital goods including technology.

Feedback on the use of FORT for wellbeing fund distribution is that the process is quick and easy for professionals to refer into with a quick response time (usually the same day) for the families seeking support.