## //I Foundations

What Works Centre for Children & Families

# Reducing Parental Conflict National Conference

Learning from enablers and challenges to support continued progress





**INTRODUCTIONS & WELCOME** 

- Overview & context for the session: Bethan Le Maistre, Foundations
- The role of family hubs in supporting effective strategic leadership for RPC: Dr Abigail Miranda, Anna Freud
- Bradford District's strategic leadership journey: Mehnaz Malik & Mark Anslow, Bradford Children's Trust
- Breakout rooms
- Summary





## **AIMS**

- Consider the role of effective strategic leadership for RPC
- Reflect on the role of family hubs in supporting effective RPC strategic leadership
- Reflect on a local example of RPC strategic leadership and the factors that support this
- Through breakout rooms reflect on barriers and enablers to effective RPC strategic leadership, consider how learning from others could be applied in your local context.

## WHY FOCUS ON STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP



#### 1. STRATEGY

PLAN

This element focuses on the local vision, strategic approach and plan for reducing the impact of conflict between parents on children. It considers how well community needs are understood, how data is used, and what the shared priorities are for taking action. It also considers how resources are aligned between partner organisations to support delivery of the local strategy. The strategic approach can be set out in an RPC-specific written strategy or integrated within wider early intervention family strategies.

#### 3. PARTNERSHIP

LEAD

This element focuses on strategic leadership and partnership working to drive forward delivery of the local strategy for reducing the impact of conflict between parents on children. It focuses on core children's services partners as well as adult mental health services, domestic abuse services, homelessness services, alcohol and substance abuse services, and probation and prison services. This element also includes how leadership is distributed across the community and local organisations.



## **STRATEGY**

#### · Local planning to improve support for vulnerable children and vulnerable adults takes **ENTRY LEVEL** account of the whole family unit. · The research evidence on parental conflict is understood by senior managers and other key stakeholders, including how it differs from domestic abuse, and it is recognised as FIRST STEPS important to child outcomes. · Initial action plans are in place to address the impact of parental conflict on children · Data about vulnerable groups is gathered from partners to identify immediate strategic issues and responses, including gaps in local knowledge. **EARLY** · Resources, including community assets, that are available for reducing parental conflict **PROGRESS** are understood, and commissioners work with providers to integrate RPC into service specifications and to develop practitioner skills. The local vision and multi-agency strategic approach for reducing the impact of parental conflict on children is agreed, communicated and woven into relevant strategic plans. An action plan delivers the strategic approach, and progress is monitored at a senior level. SUBSTANTIAL · Partners share data for a population needs assessment, which gives a clear narrative about **PROGRESS** the impact of parental conflict on children and young people, and this informs decisions. Investment in services to reduce parental conflict is a local priority, and partners pool or align funding to support delivery of the strategy, based on mapping and analysis of resources. Progress in delivering the strategic approach is monitored, reviewed and refreshed, taking account of impact to date and local learning about what has worked well and where improvements and investment need to be made.

MATURE

· There is evidence of significant shifts in investment to reduce parental conflict through

· All decisions about commissioning or redesigning family support services take account of

early intervention. There is evidence of impact as a result of investment.

strength of evidence and prioritise reducing parental conflict.

## /

## **PARTNERSHIP**

#### 0 ENTRY LEVEL

 There are established partnership arrangements for making decisions about strategic priorities for local family services.

#### 1 FIRST STEPS

- There is low but increasing awareness of the importance of addressing parental conflict, championed by some partners.
- A senior leader is accountable for driving the strategic partnership approach to reducing parental conflict.

#### 2 EARLY PROGRESS

- An identified partnership group has lead responsibility for reducing parental conflict and
  its impact on children. This brings together a growing group of partner agencies and there
  is willingness to deliver actions, share funding and responsibility, and design solutions.
  Partners are contributing to the development of the local strategy and action plan.
- Partners review the latest evidence on parental relationships and child development, and use this to consider local approaches to reducing the impact of conflict.

#### 3 SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS

- The strategic partnership group is broad, active and having an impact. Partners actively support and challenge each other.
- Governance of delivery of the strategy is clear and partners have a shared understanding of goals, performance and their role in taking action. There is an agreed process for addressing areas of underperformance.
- Operational and strategic leaders champion the importance of investment in services to reduce parental conflict and the benefits of a more joined-up approach.
- Local leaders encourage innovation and collaboration in how services are planned and delivered, alongside a focus on using evidence.

#### 4 MATURE

- An influential and effective partnership group actively owns the strategy and is accountable for the delivery of action plans for reducing parental conflict. Timely delivery of actions is routine, and there is a breadth of impact.
- Senior leaders are advocates and champions for the delivery of the local strategy for reducing parental conflict.
- Local leaders and decision-makers routinely draw on reliable evidence to inform resource use and service design, and challenge policy with a weak evidence base.

## **STRATEGY**



#### **Enablers**

- Parental conflict an explicit part of Early help strategies
- Strong partnerships with Family Hubs leads
- RPC incorporated into the Family Hubs structure and agenda

#### Challenges

- Changes in strategic leadership
- High staff turnover
- The continued promotion of RPC by senior leadership across partnership organisations

#### Next Steps

- Refresh and updates to relevant strategies
- Establish/review steering group membership
- Establish effective partnership Governance arrangements
- Develop understanding of local needs to inform strategies
- Increasing awareness among the multi-agency workforce

## **PARTNERSHIP**



#### **Enablers**

- Delivery of awareness raising sessions with partner organisations
- Joint training initiatives codesigned with partner agencies
- Co-development of an RPC delivery plan with partners

#### Challenges

- Engaging some partner services and organisations
- Keeping partner agencies engaged
- Capacity and competing priorities

#### Next Steps

- Develop a multi-agency steering group and/or working group
- Sharing strategic responsibility for RPC
- Developing an engagement plan



## Dr Abigail Miranda, Anna Freud

The role of family hubs in supporting effective strategic leadership for Reducing Parental Conflict

## The National Centre for Family Hubs

The role of family hubs in supporting effective strategic leadership for Reducing Parental Conflict



## 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 work 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 and our evidence partner is <u>Foundations</u>.





## Participation

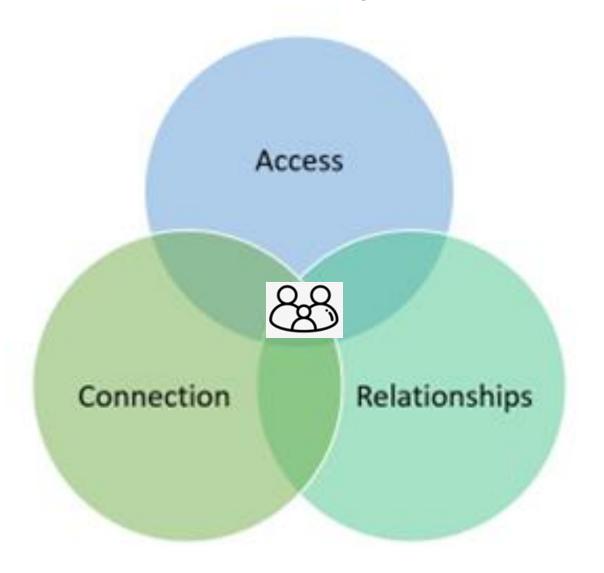
All our work is rooted in participation, understanding the lived experiences of children, families and stakeholders in the development of family hubs.



The Lundy Model of Participation, 2007



## The family voice



"Families have told us that they sometimes experience difficulty interacting with the complex service landscape and have to 're-tell their story' to different services and professionals"

Family hubs and start for life programme guide p4



## A policy snapshot



## Family Hubs: Local Transformation Fund

**Application form** 



Promotional material

Summary of the SEND review: right support, right place, right time

Updated 27 May 2022











#### Minimum expectations

#### Service available face to face at a family hub:

Staff in the family hub are aware of the evidence on the impact of parental
conflict, can identify it, can distinguish it from domestic abuse, and provide
universal level support and initial early support (conversations with a trained
practitioner - level 2), providing or connecting to moderate support (structured
support from a trained practitioner - level 3) where required, whether this is on
or off site. This support is available to parents who are together, separating or
separated

#### Service available through the family hub but received elsewhere in the network:

 Staff in the family hub can connect parents to moderate support (structured support from a trained practitioner - level 3)

## Virtual services available through the family hub, including static online information and/or interactive virtual services:

 Universal support available virtually e.g. information, apps, videos, and practitioners are available to offer early and moderate support virtually



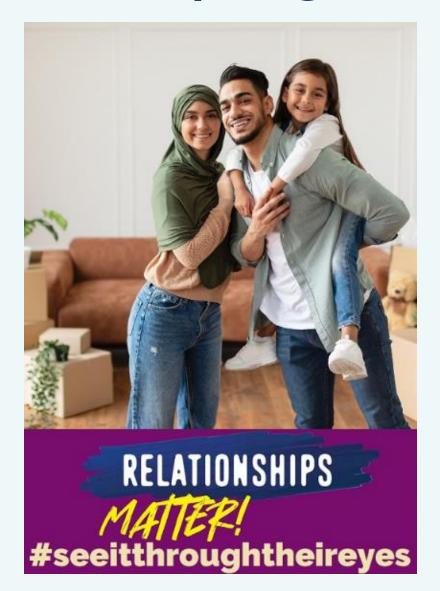
## **Annex F: Family Hub Service Expectations**

Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme guide

August 2022



## Developing a local offer...



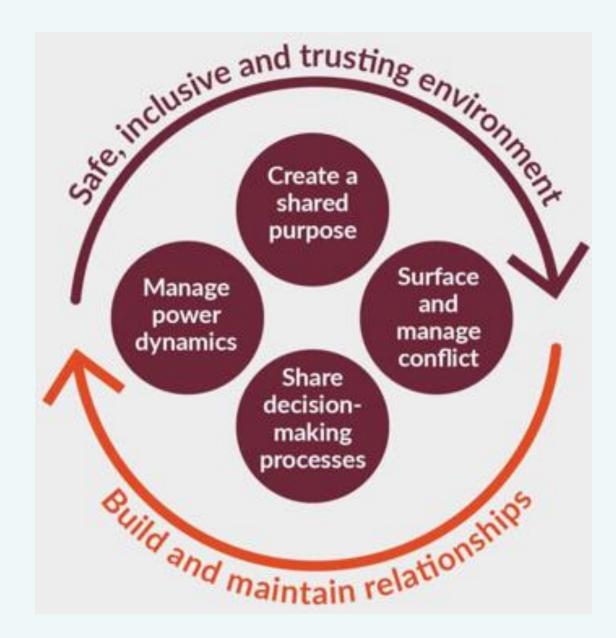
- Family Hubs supports integration of services, but also provides a welcoming space for families
- Raises awareness of staff to signpost to RPC services within Family Hubs
- Peer support and combined training offer with RPC and Family Hubs
- Normalising conversations around parental conflict
- Way to provide whole-family support and capture the voice of the child



## Incorporating effective governance structures

- Transformation and systems change with collaboration and commitment from across
  - children's early help system
  - local community
- Integrated early help governance
  - Vision
  - Shared approach and outcomes
- Governance structures must enable different agencies to
  - Take collective responsibility
  - Share risks
  - Jointly invest in family hubs
  - Represent the views of parents, carers and young people

**Anna Freud** 

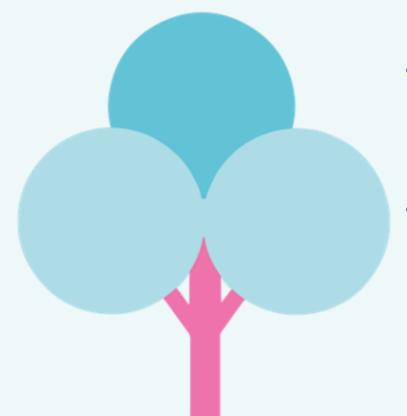


## Collaborative Leadership

Collaborative leadership is grounded in the belief that a shared model of leadership is more creative and effective than a leader or group of staff working alone...A true collaboration values difference and prevents any one organisation or group from dominating. (Kings Fund, 2023)



## Developing effective leadership



- Integrated governance and co-production of family hubs needs to be sustained through effective local integrated leadership arrangements.
- Leadership arrangements should include:
  - Local VCS
  - Faith Partners
- LAs need to **nurture** and **strengthen** integrated leadership arrangements through:
  - Workforce development
  - Supervision



## Evaluation & Sustainability...

- Embedding RPC outcomes into a systems-wide Family Hubs outcomes framework
- How to capture progress through local evaluation
- Making a local case to embed Family Hubs and RPC into Early Help strategy/Children's Plan







## Mehnaz Malik & Mark Anslow, Bradford Children and Families Trust

Strategic Leadership



# Strategic leadership: Our journey in Bradford District



## Key element of our approach:



Relationships Matter branding

18 Relationship Matters practice leaders

Broad based public awareness raising campaigns

Strategic Needs assessment inform plans Training offer: toolkit & awareness/signposting 1925 trained to date

Regional links and developments

Families & Youth Information



## Ownership and local/regional/national system engagement:

- PEH service manager strat. lead since start of programme. Dedicated Practice Lead and L & D Officer
- Intentional decision to incorp rather than stand alone
- PEH for CYP Board/Family Hubs and DA/SV Board (and tri boards) vision, priorities and reporting
- Enquiry sessions/strategic needs assessments/workforce surveys/family and youth consultations
- ASKs of Board active support
- Engaged with EIF/Foundations research and development opportunities
- Comms often on progress inc. Monthly Progress reports and Pledgees
- Common language and shared development of THRIVE

### Relationships Matter – common language and shared pathways:

#### **Getting advice**

#### Respectful, equal, co-operative happy

- All relationships have tricky moments, it's how they are experienced and resolved that matter
- Children are experiencing constructive resolution of any arguments, characterised by mutual respect and emotional control

#### **Getting help**

Mostly respectful, equal, co-operative, but experiencing difficulty

- · Lack of open and honest communication
- Difficulties are minimised, not recognised or addressed
- Children beginning to be affected by conflict between their parents

#### **Getting risk support**

Abuse, violence - controlling/abusive behaviour,
 coercive control (everyday behaviour being regulated)
 physical harm, sexual violence, fear of violence/death

- Day to day unresolved and unresolveable conflicts
- Clearer 'victim' and clearer 'abuser'
- Clear 'abuser' and 'victim' who is at significant risk of harm
- Children being adversely/significantly adversely affected
- Children may show signs of distress and their mental health/behaviour may/and/or be affected
- · Children at risk of significant harm, children being traumatised
- \*\* This is NOT conflict, this is domestic abuse/sexual violence \*\*

#### **Getting more help**

Conflictual, non communicative, non violent

- · Conflict is frequent, intense and poorly resolved
- Conflict can consistent of criticism, contempt for one another, defensiveness and deliberately ignoring (stonewalling)
- Parents emotionally unavailable to their partner and/or children
- · Lack of consistency in parenting
- Feeling isolated
- Toxic atmosphere
- Parents unable to break the cycle of these challenging behaviours without support
- · Children being adversely affected





THRIVING

Presenting needs



### Relationships Matter – common language and shared pathways:

- National website home -Relationship Matters
- One Plus One digital courses:
   Me, You and Baby Too
   Arguing Better
   Getting it Right for the Children
- . The Little Book of Relationship Tips
- Families can access FYI Directory Relationships Matter / Bradford Families and Young Persons for universal support and advice

- Follow local domestic abuse/sexual violence pathway
- For more support and info visit Home -Bradford DASV (bradford-dasv.co.uk)
- Complete MARAC if appropriate or seek advice if unsure.

- Early conversations with a professional
- . Consider if Early Help Assessment required
- · One Plus One digital courses
- Parenting courses
   Parenting Programmes for Families /
   Bradford Families and Young Persons
- Relationships Matter Toolkit which any professional can use
- FYI Website for self guided resources and other agencies that can support with factors contributing to conflict



services and resources

- Undertake an Early Help Assessment to rule out domestic abuse and/or consider referral for family support.
- Consider parenting referral after improvements in couple relationship
- One Plus One intervention undertaken alongside support from a professional
- Relationships Matter Toolkit
- 6 Structured sessions on Relationships Matter









## Relationships Matters relaunch conference

(April 23)

- Strategic partners and system workforce
- Open by Council and CF trust's CXs Amity & EIF/Foundations speakers
- Shared key points from the needs assessment/multi agency survey
- Launched new resources and training
- THRIVE model
- Pledges (93 signed pledges)
- Conference attended by over 200 delegates

© 2023 Bradford Children and Families Trust



## Suggestions to develop strategic leadership:

- Continuously linking to the right people/networking/attending events across the District - tailor and bespoke where you can
- Stakeholder map and keep it live
- Incorp in strategies/reporting i.e. supporting families, DA/SV prevention strategy
- Having relevant data sets for your area universal and targeting
- Don't give up, persevere and repeat/refresh active and regular comms

© 2023 Bradford Children and Families Trust