



Effective Child Protection

Children and Supporting Families Service

Cyngor Gwynedd Council

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Effective Child Protection

A model based of four key components

- **Conversations** - collaborative conversations
- **Thresholds** – consistent decisions
- **Change** – a focus on change
- **Measure** – measuring outcomes



How is this transformational?

'Effective Child Protection' in Gwynedd aims to:

- change the underlying '**operating system**' of child protection
- re-define our **strategy** to protect children
- re-configure our practices and **processes** to support this
- re-envision the model throughout the **organisation**
- change the way workers **think, feel** and **behave** in practice
- go beyond better – towards something **different**



How is this transformational?

We are transforming by shifting:

- to having **fundamentally** different conversations with families
- to having increasingly more **collaborative** conversations
- to using **new concepts** such as a 'focus on change' and 'measuring outcomes' in day to day practice
- to using **reflection** to develop practice awareness of practitioners, in thought, feelings and actions
- and using **mentoring** to develop deeper understanding of application of skills, techniques and knowledge into actual practice



How is this transformational?

We are transforming by:

- being **radical** – testing ideas in the most high risk practice arena
- working **meaningfully** – no spin – seeing if practice really changes
- bridging gaps – unspoken **omissions** in procedures
- testing **assumptions** – that the collaborative skills really can extend confidently in child protection



Collaborative conversations

What have we achieved so far?

- Staff have received **training** – training needs analysis undertaken, training scheduled and monitored
- Individual mentoring **sessions** for each worker
- **Mentoring Training** for champions, national and local groups
- Gathering individual workers' **accounts** of their experiences, the successes and also the difficulties
- Feels **very early** in our practice application of collaborative conversations in child protection



Thresholds

What have we achieved so far?

- Staff continue to use Risk Model to test the statutory thresholds
- Risk Model **well embedded**
- Caution required against **complacency**
- Work pressure increases possibility that staff take **short-cuts** in how decisions are reached and evidenced.
- **Refresher sessions** are provided and the practice mentor focusses on application of the Risk Model in individual discussions with staff.



Change

What have we achieved so far?

- Staff report this is greatest **success** to date
- Already seeing increased **focus** across our Child Protection processes
- Modification to social work **reports** to Case Conference
- Modification to how Case Conferences are **chaired** and recorded
- 'Focus on change' is a very **practical** concept for staff
- Direction for Core Groups increasingly **clearer** from Case Conferences
- Effective Child Protection **training** event rolled out



Measure

What have we achieved so far?

- Most **difficult** element of model for staff to apply in practice.
- Difficult technique to understand and apply; requires **time** with families
- **Increased paperwork** associated with this element
- Some Core Groups deemed practically **unsuitable** for this discussion
- Second Core Group often described as **challenging** to just keeping focus on change, let alone developing 'Steps to Change'
- We remain ambitious and **optimistic** - implementing Risk 2 faced that same early hesitancy.



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What have we learned so far?

- We've applied **collaboration** and **co-production** as a theme in how project is developed and managed (in contrast with Risk Model)
- Extending **mentoring** role (champion) to senior and team managers necessary to broaden impact (ref. Collaborative Conversations)
- Practice Mentor is **critical** success factor
- Practice Mentor has to be patient and **flexible** with staff
- Mentoring engages **meaningful** conversations about understanding and application into practice

"As someone who attends child protection case conferences regularly as part of my work, since the introduction of the project, I've noticed an increased focus in social workers' reports on the changes required in a child's circumstances to reduce the risk of harm. This in turn positively informs case conference discussions and provides a framework on which core group members, including the family, can develop the child protection plan."

Associate Specialist in Community Paediatrics



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What are we worried about?

- Project **timescales** and funding
- How do we evaluate **appropriately** v external demands for 'proof'
- That we may find that 'collaborative conversations' is **not a panacea** for application in child protection
- How do we guard against the effect of **overt optimism** and the search for 'silver bullets' in the area of Child Protection and LAC Reduction
- That 'Steps to Change' is **too much work** for staff under pressure



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What gives us confidence?

- We've already **delivered benefits** and improvement to practice
- We've **created** products and **value** which can endure
- We've **mobilised** the workforce positively in the project
- The Practice Mentor is delivering **individual**, customised support
- Project team '**honest**' about achievements and difficulties
- We are **optimistic** and see this as still in early stages of change
- Perfectionists who know this can never be perfect - we'll keep trying



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Next steps

- Currently **rolling out** of pilot area – into Arfon
- Next 16+ Team and Children with Disabilities
- Project '**on schedule**'
- Launch of websites and intranet site
- Extended **learning products to be developed** e.g. eLearning
- Individual mentoring **approach** refined and implemented
- Group mentoring **approach** refined and implemented

Further information and contact details

Website:

<https://www.effectivechildprotection.wales>

Contact details:

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