

# CHILDREN, PARENTAL CONFLICT & PUBLIC SERVICES

How local services must  
reduce parental conflict to  
improve outcomes for  
children and young people



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# WELCOME

Dr Jo Casebourne  
Chief Executive,  
Early Intervention Foundation

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**Ambitions for today:**



# Reducing Parental Conflict, Everyone's Business



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Engaging new set of public service leaders and commissioners

Setting out the case for change

Describing the support and challenge available

Calling for local action

Mobilising change-makers

# EIF: Who we are



Making the case  
for EI

Generating  
evidence

Influencing policy  
and practice



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# EIF and Interparental Relationships



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WHAT WORKS TO ENHANCE  
INTER-PARENTAL  
RELATIONSHIPS AND IMPROVE  
OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN

**US**  
UNIVERSITY  
OF SUSSEX



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

GORDON HAROLD, DANIEL ACQUAH, RUTH SELLERS & HAROON  
CHOWDRY  
EDITED BY LEON FEINSTEIN

# Conflict between parents



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- **Normal?**
- **Constructive**
- **Destructive**



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# THE CASE FOR CHANGE

**Donna Molloy**  
Director of Policy and Practice,  
Early Intervention Foundation

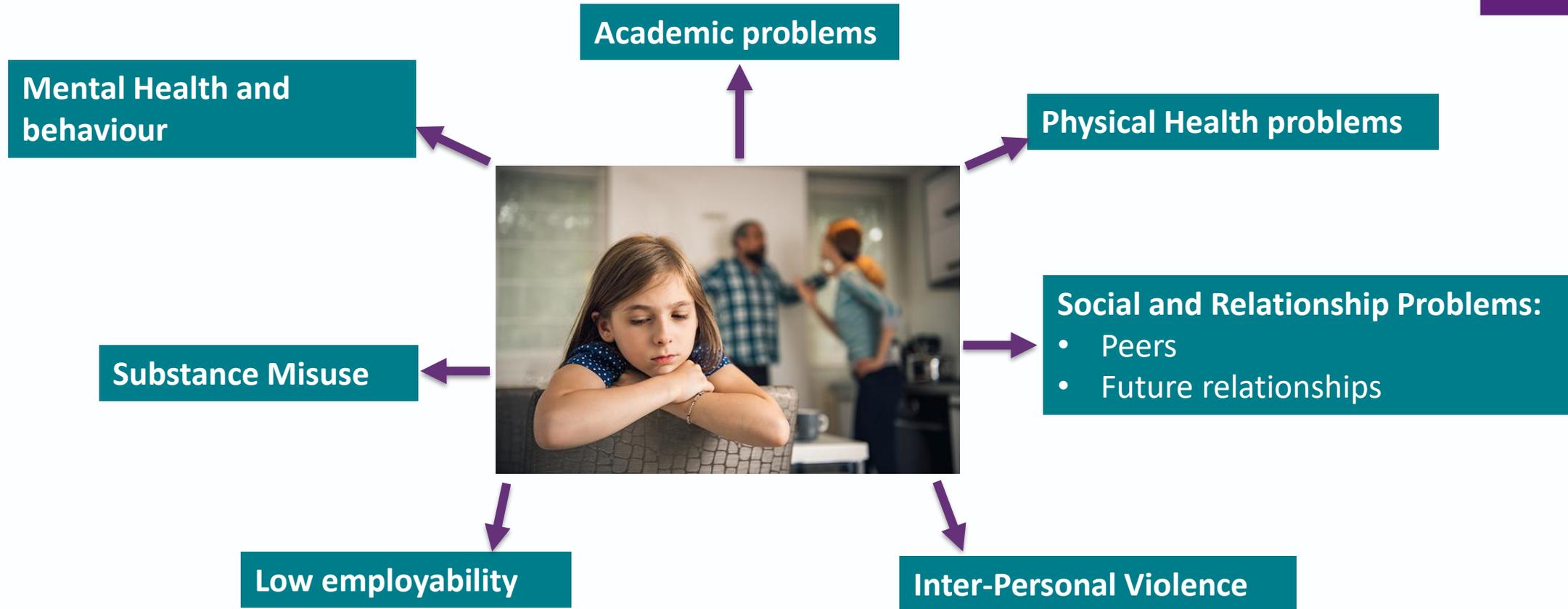
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# How parental conflict impacts on children





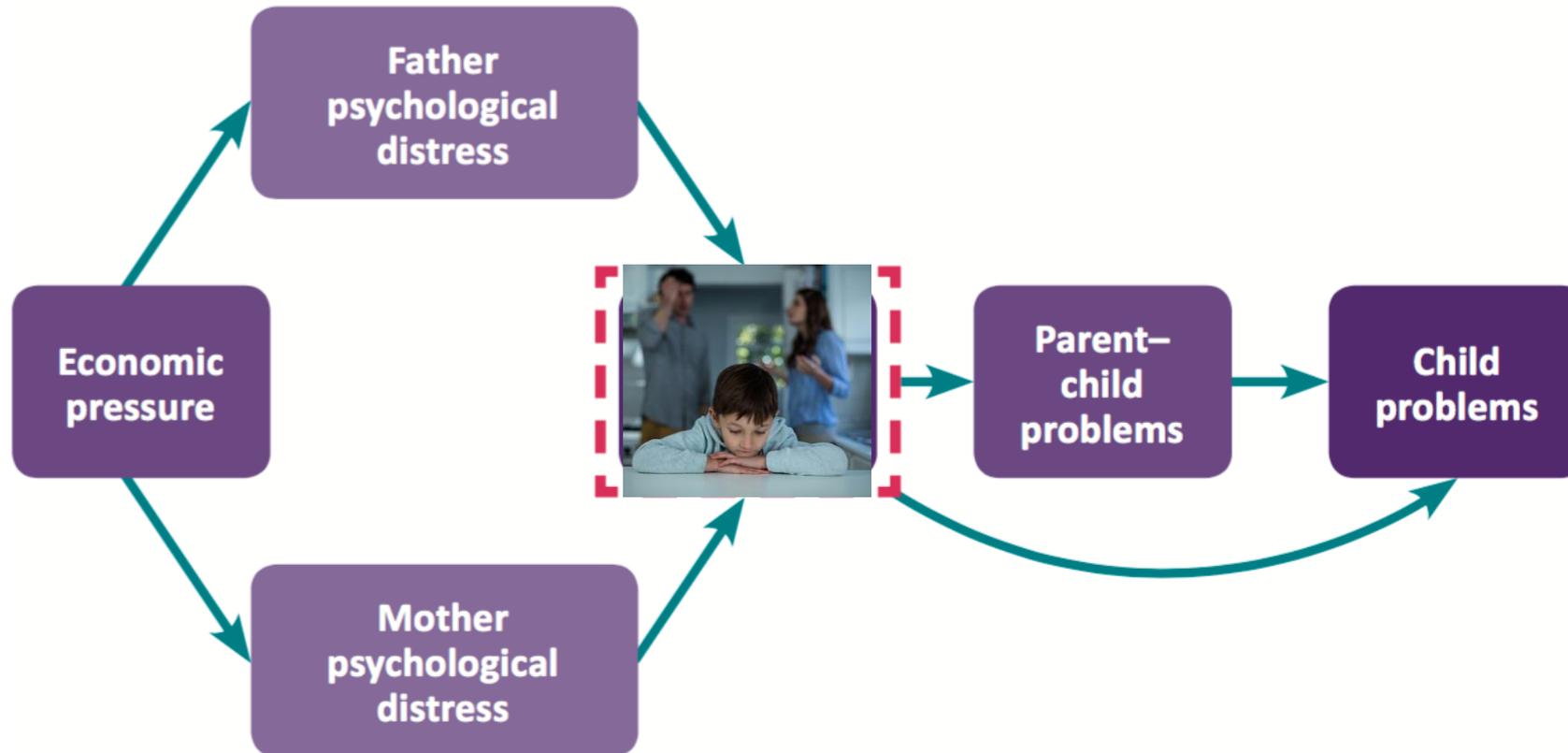
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**What is the scale of  
the issue?**



# Family Stress Model





# Are family services missing the target?

Not dealing with the underlying issue for some families ?

Not reaching those who need support the most?

Yet the consequences of conflict are a **significant cost** for public services





# There are reasons why this is such 'neglected territory for early intervention'

Separate planning and  
commissioning between  
children's and adults services

Concern about  
'interfering in the private  
matter of a relationship  
between two adults

Front-line practitioners  
lacking confidence, tools and  
knowledge to identify and  
deal with relationship conflict

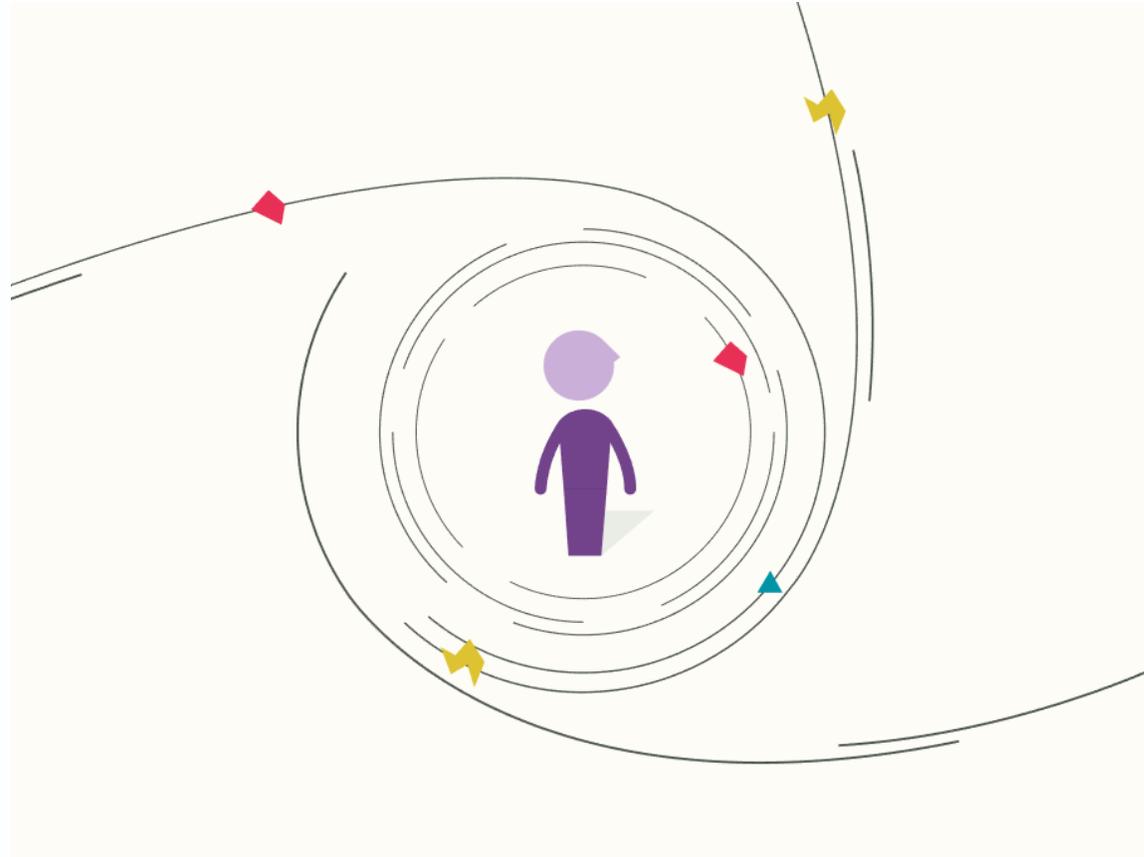
Couples only seek help when  
they have already reached  
crisis point







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## Reducing Parental Conflict

Why does it matter to children, and why does it matter to services?

# PANEL: WHY PARENTAL CONFLICT MATTERS FOR PUBLIC SERVICES



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# PANEL: WHY PARENTAL CONFLICT MATTERS FOR PUBLIC SERVICES

**Patrick Myers**  
Assistant Director,  
Children's Services,  
Dorset County Council



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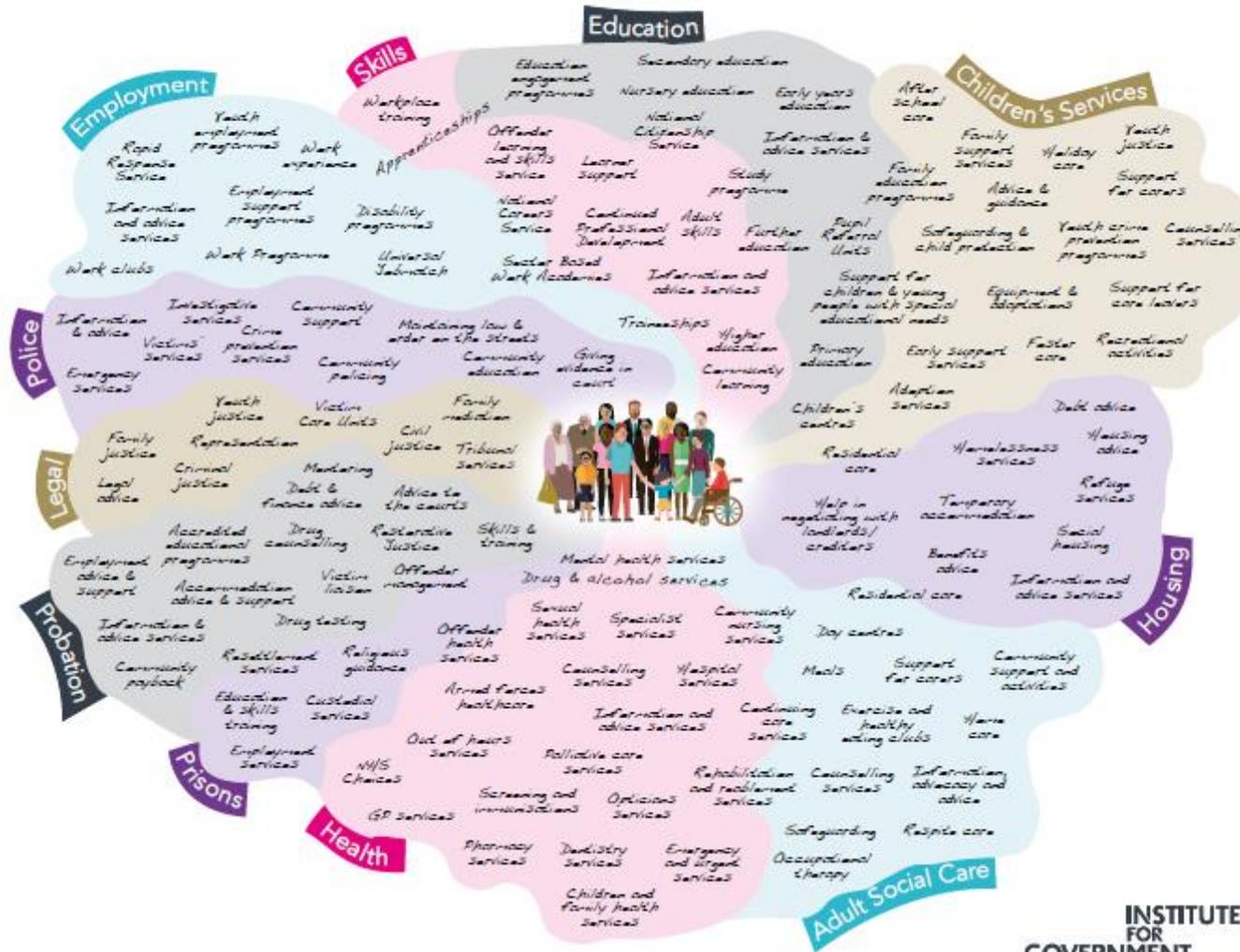
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# THE LANDSCAPE OF PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY AT A LOCAL LEVEL



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# Why?

- Organisation

- Demand Management
- Resource Release and redeployment
- Focus on most in need
- Graduated approach
- Budget
  - Tax
  - Housing
  - Health and Social Care
  - Civil and Criminal Justice
  - Education and Young People

- People

- Quality of life for families
- Improved attainment through attendance
- Less LAC ( 90% DV in CP)
- Emotional Health and Wellbeing
- Physical Health
- Parent Child Relationship
- Authoritative Parenting Style
- More emotionally available for children
- .....and more

# PANEL: WHY PARENTAL CONFLICT MATTERS FOR PUBLIC SERVICES

**Alison Priestley**  
Service Manager,  
Early Help & Family Support,  
Newcastle City Council



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# Why Parental Conflict Matters for Public Services



Parental Conflict is generally not a single issue difficulty facing families.

It therefore requires a multi agency response. Implications of Parental conflict (and its costs) borne across the whole of the public sector.

An analysis of families accessing Newcastle's Phase 1 of the Local Family Offer found they also accessed the following;

- ❖ Social worker support
- ❖ Intensive family support / family support
- ❖ Universal Plus and Universal Partnership Plus levels of support from health visiting
- ❖ Support around children's attendance / behaviour in school
- ❖ Mental Health Support
- ❖ Support around drug and alcohol use.
- ❖ Support to access education / training / employment
- ❖ Support for ongoing health needs

# Why Parental Conflict Matters for Public Services



In Newcastle the Local Families Offer has had a multi agency steering group in order to share the learning.

This learning has been fed into the Troubled Families Programme Board. Parental Conflict was identified added as an issue to the Early Help Plan Family Outcomes form

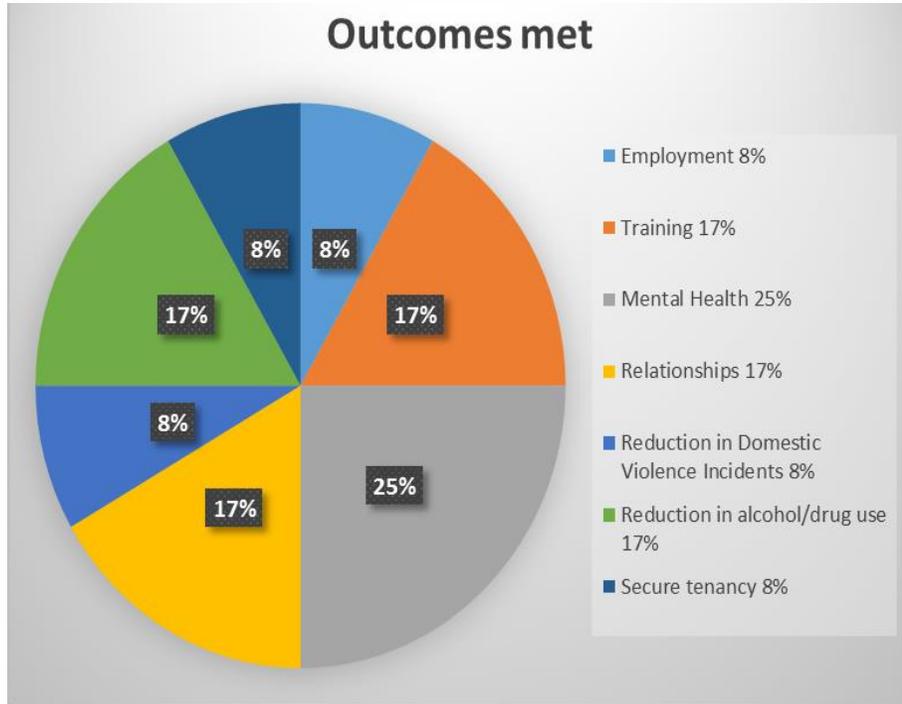
Health services (Midwifery/HV) could be uniquely well placed to identify parental conflict – universal service, present in the home, whole family assessment of need BUT....

Need for Workforce Development.

New post of Relationship Navigator developed with Health BUT....

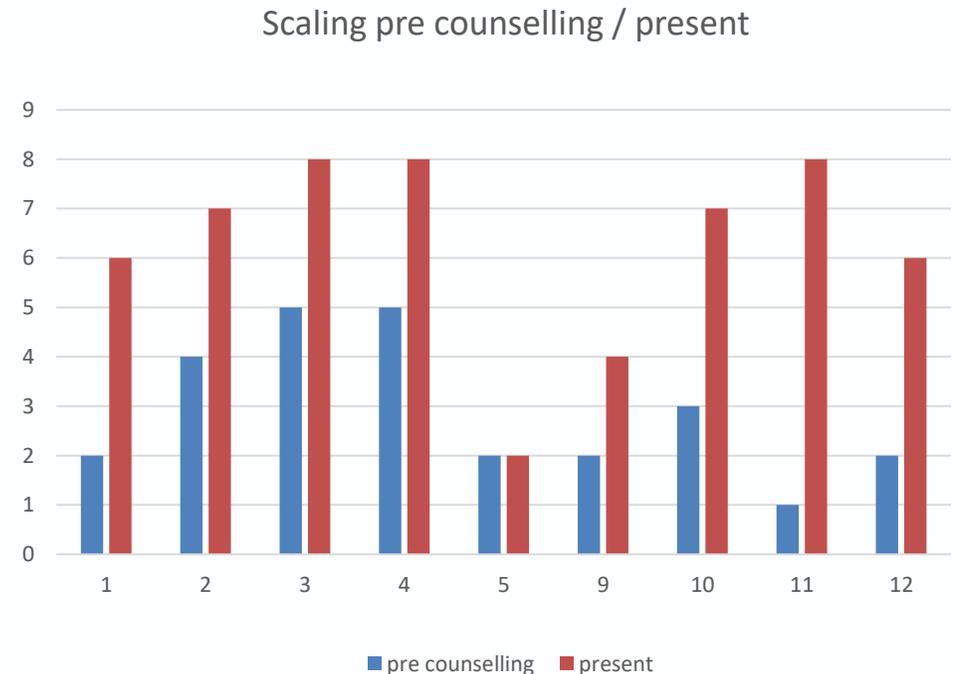
Need for easier access to more specialised services. Commissioned Relate BUT....

# Why Parental Conflict Matters for Public Services



Pie chart shows outcomes met in Phase 1 of the Local Family Offer – 50% of cases were open to Children’s Social Care (LAC, CP and CIN) and 50% open to Early Help services with an Early Help Plan.

## Referrer scaling of families accessing counselling



# PANEL: WHY PARENTAL CONFLICT MATTERS FOR PUBLIC SERVICES

**Chris Martin**

Director, Strategic Commissioning  
& Policy – Children and Families,  
Essex County Council



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# Parental relationships - Why it matters

Impacts of unhealthy parental relationships;

- Parental social and emotional well-being
- Children's social, emotional, behavioural and academic outcomes
- Inter-generational behaviours impacting family stability
- Public service demand; LAs Education, Health, Police
- Inevitable detrimental economic impact



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# Parental relationships – What can we do



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## Prevention

Lack of pro-active information advice and guidance on parental relationships with support traditionally being reactionary in the domestic abuse space

## Workforce Culture

**“Parent”** associated with mother; Don’t ask the right and brave questions. Too often label the children as “the problem” and don’t look to the parents

## Service Design

Still not integrated enough  
Not accessible at right times, particularly for mums and dads. Not always being provided early enough and still lacking significant links with adult services

## Processes & Practice

Mother and child centric practice; Gather little information on fathers results in little and no real understanding of parental dynamics

# Parental relationships – What we've been doing



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**Prevention** We are co-producing a *Healthy Relationships Information Advice and Guidance* pack to support parents recognize, acknowledge and respond to their own relationship needs early

**Processes** Recent review of father/dads research and practice coupled with our parental relationships work with DWP has led to *reviewing child/mother centric processes* to ensure we take account the needs of parents, especially fathers and dads to be more inclusive

**Service Design** We've been working to ensure "*holistic*" includes dads and direct work with whole families at the earliest point of need when designing service delivery

## Workforce Culture

Increased numbers of mums and dads being worked with directly to address their needs. Enabled by a *relational capable workforce* that facilitates parents able to accept they (often their relationship) are part/cause of "the problem" and not their children.

# Essex System Vision



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 **Work to families' strengths** especially those of parents and carers and take time to understand their needs fully.

 **Focus on preventing problems** before they occur and offer flexible, responsive support when and where it's required.

 **Build the resilience of parents**, young people, children and communities to support each other.

 **Be clear and consistent about the outcomes** we expect, and judge what we do against them.

 **Base all we do on evidence** of both what is needed and of what works and be brave enough to stop things that are wrong.

 **Work together across the whole system** aligning our resources so we can best support families and do what needs to be done when it needs to be done.

## We will know our system is successful if it delivers these outcomes:

			
<p><b>Children and Young People...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are physically and emotionally healthy</li> <li>• Are resilient and able to learn well</li> <li>• Are supported by their families, their community, and - when necessary - professionals to thrive and be successful</li> <li>• Live in environments that are safe and support their learning and development.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Parents and Carers...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are supporting one another in their communities</li> <li>• Know where to get help if they need it</li> <li>• Have trusted relationships with practitioners, neighbours and other parents</li> <li>• Are well informed about how best to help their child develop, and motivated to make great choices.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Communities...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See it as their collective responsibility to support parents, children and young people</li> <li>• Are providing sustainable support through individuals, community groups, businesses and voluntary organisations</li> <li>• Are seen, understood and valued by practitioners as being 'part of the solution'.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Practitioners...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus first on families and their strengths</li> <li>• Work closely with families to understand what they need, and build trusting relationships</li> <li>• Have a shared vision and understanding of outcomes and success</li> <li>• Are skilled, knowledgeable and are co-creating and co-delivering approaches that work.</li> </ul>

# PANEL: WHY PARENTAL CONFLICT MATTERS FOR PUBLIC SERVICES

## Questions



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# CALL TO ACTION

**Kit Malthouse MP**  
Minister for Family Support,  
Housing & Child Maintenance,  
Department for Work & Pensions

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# REDUCING PARENTAL CONFLICT NATIONAL PROGRAMME

**Donna Ward**  
Director - Children, Families and  
Disadvantage,  
Department for Work & Pensions



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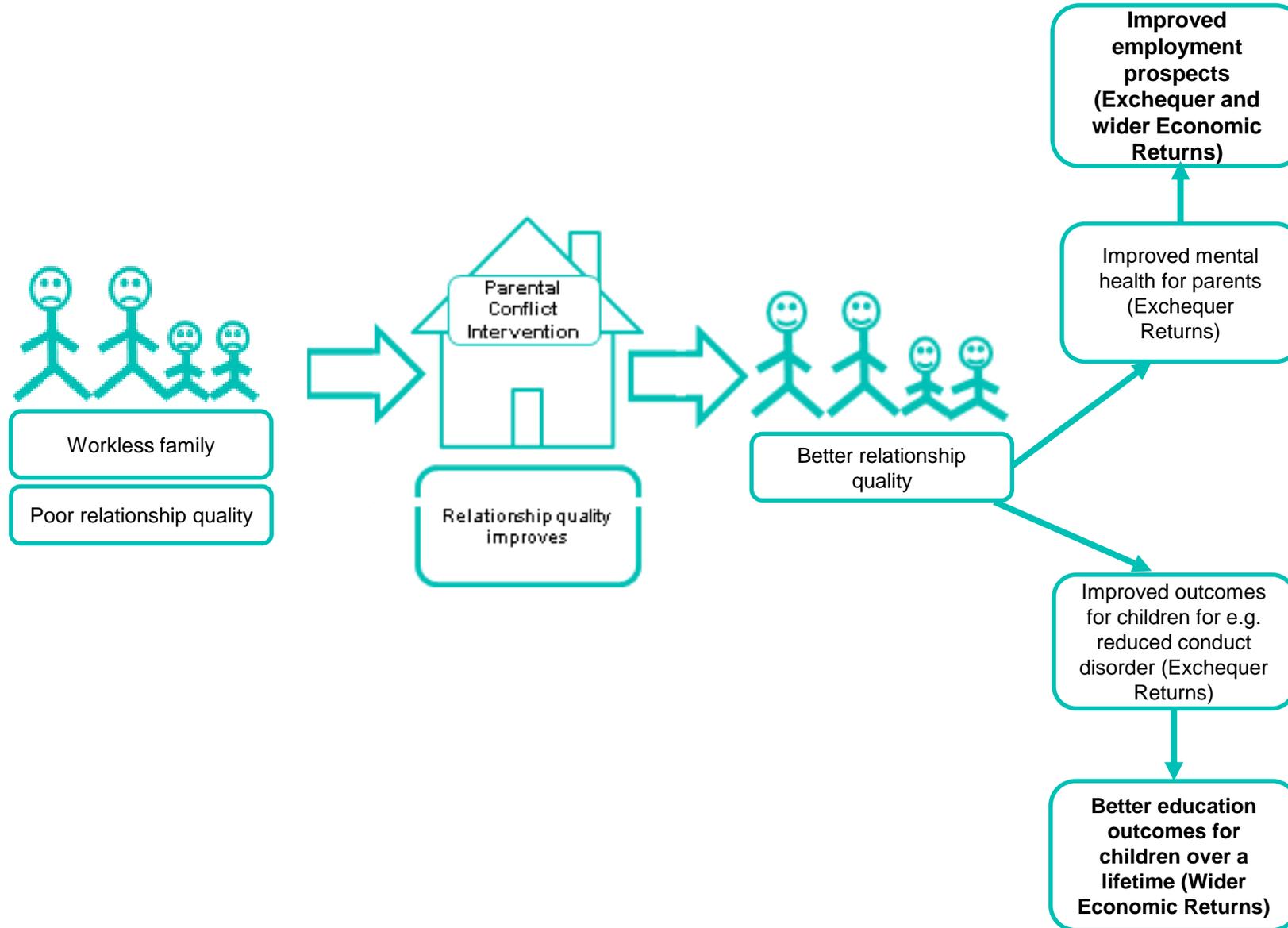


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# Reducing Parental Conflict - impact on families



# Prevalence of Parental Conflict

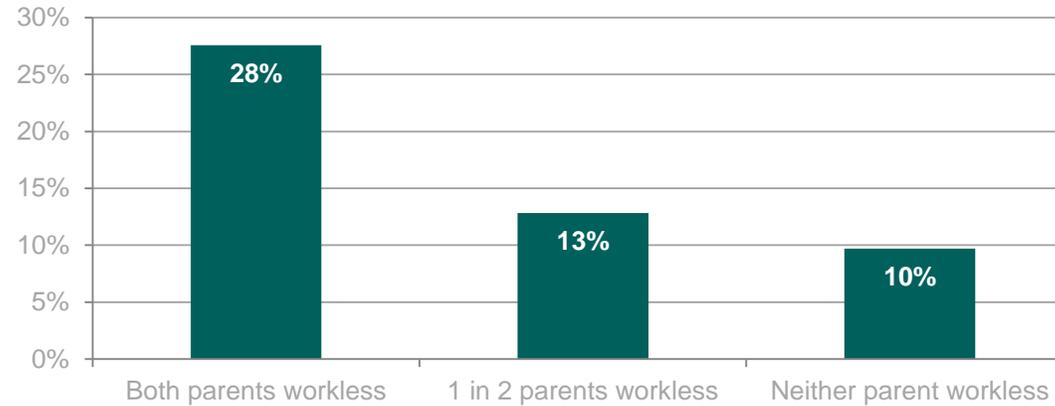
## 28%

Out of all children living in workless couple-parent families (this is 5% of all children), live with parents who report having a distressed relationship.

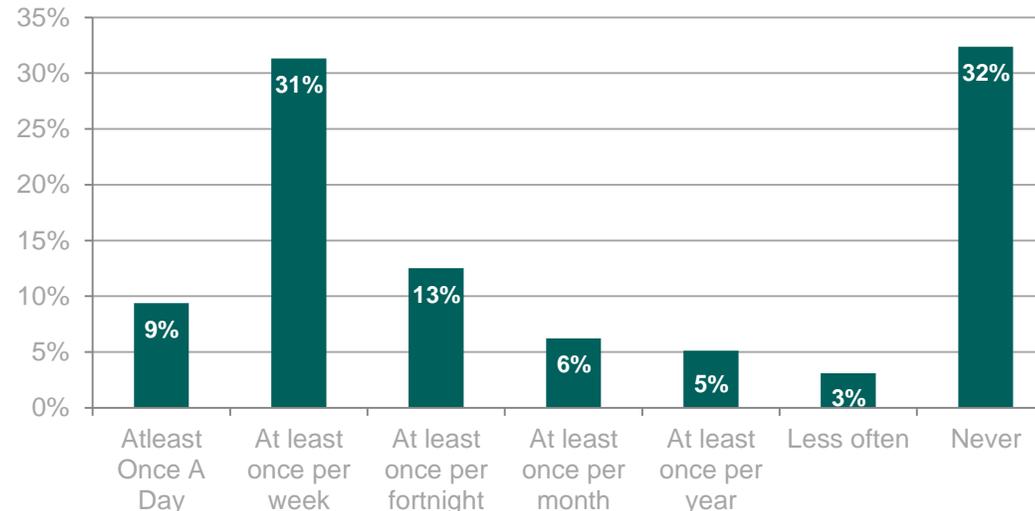
**Almost three times as prevalent compared with where both parents are working.**

**53%** children in separated families see their non resident parent at least once a fortnight

Proportion of children in couple-parent families reporting relationship distress by parental workless status



How often resident parents report that the child 'usually sees' their non-resident parent during term time (2013-2014)



# Local Family Offer (LFO) findings

We have been working with twelve local authorities since 2015 to test local strategies – evidence and insight from these early adopters has had significant impact on the design of the programme

## The LFO areas found the following the most helpful aspects:

- **Consultancy support:** DWP provided individual consultancy support to:
  - Understand why intervening to reduce parental conflict is important and how to intervene successfully
  - Support the development of evidence based strategies
- **Workforce Development and Culture Change:** Training from awareness to delivering specialist interventions
- **Measuring success:** LFO areas developed an evaluation strategy, inputting to the national evaluation including performance measures.

# There are two key objectives of the programme

## 1) Creating new markets for face-to-face services in four geographical areas

- New services will be delivered in each area, procured directly by DWP, with LAs referring parents
- These new contracts with suppliers will be managed by DWP

## 2) Supporting areas to integrate parental conflict support within existing services

- Investing money in staff training, including of front-line staff
- Setting up a What Works Centre through the Early Intervention Foundation

# Face to Face Support

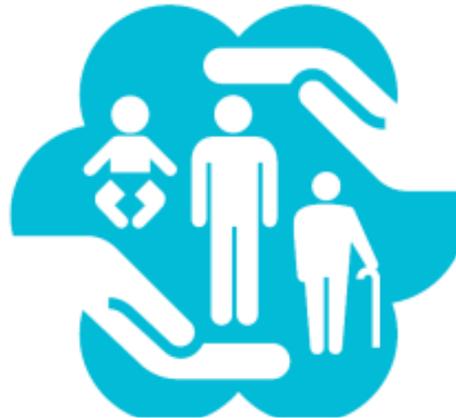
## The Contract Package Areas:

Lead Authority	Geographical Coverage	
Westminster	Westminster Brent Croydon Fulham Lambeth	Kensington & Chelsea Camden Hammersmith &
Gateshead	Gateshead Sunderland South Tyneside Middlesbrough Redcar & Cleveland	Newcastle Northumberland Hartlepool Durham
Hertfordshire	Hertfordshire Cambridgeshire Southend	Essex Buckinghamshire Peterborough
Dorset	Dorset Somerset Bournemouth Plymouth	Devon Wiltshire Poole Torbay

# The Range of Interventions



1. Within my Reach
2. Family Check Up Intervention
3. Focus on Kids
4. Parents Plus



5. Couple Coping Enhancement Training
6. Enhanced Triple P
7. Incredible Years
8. Mentalization
9. “4Rs 2Ss” Family Strengthening Programme
10. Family Transitions Triple P

# Reducing Parental Conflict – Face to Face provision

## Overview of LA role:

Identify parents with parental conflict needs  
determine level of support needed

### Eligible Population

- Identify and support both parents to participate
- Confirm eligibility

### Identification/Referral

- Obtain data consent
- Complete referral form, send to DWP

### Screening Questionnaire

- High or moderate need or no support required
- Share information with supplier & DWP.

### Start Programme

- Encourage engagement and participation

### Completion

- Provide MI/ Data
- Supplier to share details of completed programme

# RPCP Evaluation

STRAND	EVALUATION AIMS	EVALUATION APPROACH
<b>Face to face services</b>	The evaluation will provide evidence on the implementation, delivery and perceived impact of the F2F provision.	The evaluation will include both quantitative and qualitative elements as appropriate for each aim. We will consider experience of participants, providers and Local Authority staff.
<b>Training</b>	Examining whether training has changed practice on the ground, in terms of the identification, support available and the extent to which practitioners' feel skilled to deliver support/ the interventions.	
<b>Local Integration</b>	Examining whether and how local authorities have integrated elements of parental conflict support into mainstream services for families.	
<b>Digital support</b>	The scope of the evaluation of this strand will be confirmed following user research to determine digital needs.	

# What other support is DWP putting in place?

**Building on the findings from the Local Family Offer trials the Programme will include the following:**

- **Peer support:** funding LFO areas to be Ambassadors for the programme to share their knowledge, skills and expertise around parental conflict
- **Integration Leads:** secondees from local areas with the relevant skills and knowledge to design and support local areas
- **Building capability:** making funding available for all local areas for training and workforce development
- **Maturity Matrix:** The Programme will be working with LAs and EIF to develop a range of tools to support the integration of services to reduce parental conflict within local delivery.
- **Online resources:** There are a number of online resources available to support local areas who want to find out more

# Regional Integration Leads

40% of our time gathering quality management information and evidence and report to the Senior Integration Lead in the Programme, providing meaningful reports on local progress made a local level.

40% of our time working with stakeholders including Local Authorities, Troubled Families Co-Ordinators, Jobcentre Plus etc to plan and develop local strategies to transform service delivery.

20% of our time working together to share learning, expertise and best practice



# Available resources and next steps

## Online resources currently available:

[Lessons from the Local Family Offer](#)

[EIF Commissioner Guide](#)

[What works to Enhance Inter-parental Relationships and Improve Children's Outcomes](#)

[Family Resource Tool](#)

## Future activity:

**Maturity Matrix:** We want to consult LAs to determine the support they need to successfully integrate change or if there are other products/support they need.

**Training offer:** We are currently designing our training offer to be available later this year.

# Working Together

- Thanks for taking the time to come today and hear more about the Programme
- We welcome your support and input to find out more about what works and to make a difference for children
- We know what the problem is – join us to help us find the answers!
- Register today by emailing us [rpc.programme@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:rpc.programme@dwp.gsi.gov.uk) and we will link you in with our Integration Team so you can benefit from the support available

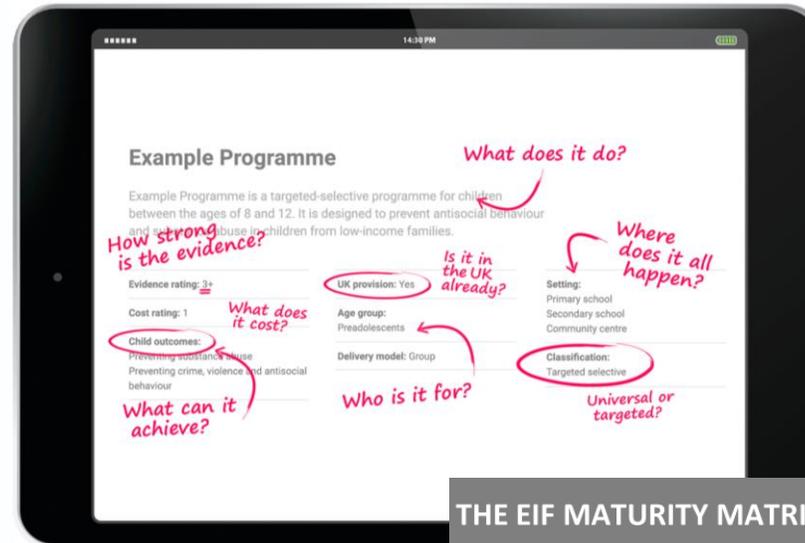
# Reducing Parental Conflict EIF Offer



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## The RPC Hub



## The Guidebook

## The Commissioner Guide



## The Maturity Matrix (coming soon)

### THE EIF MATURITY MATRIX on Reducing Parental Conflict

4 DIMENSIONS		10 KEY ELEMENTS		4 PROGRESS LEVELS								
PLAN		1 STRATEGY		1	Basic level	Principle accepted and commitment to action	2	Early progress	3	Substantial progress	4	Mature
		2 COMMISSIONING										
LEAD		3 PARTNERSHIP										
		4 LEADERSHIP										
DELIVER		5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT										
		6 CO-ORDINATED WORKING										
EVALUATE		7 INFORMATION & DATA										
		8 WORKFORCE PLANNING										
		9 OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK										
		10 USING & GENERATING EVIDENCE										

# BREAK / MOBILISATION WORKSHOPS

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# Mobilisation Workshops: 12.00 and 12.40



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## **1. Planning for change: Maturity Matrix**

Lil Patrick Room

## **2. Applying the evidence in practice**

Main hall – back  
room

## **3. Building workforce confidence and capability**

Main hall – by  
entrance

## **4. Making an evidence based programme work for you**

Fred Miller Room