



Our ambition

- Dudley are passionate about making a real difference to the children and families we work with and in order to do this we are implementing a Restorative Practice Model to achieve our ambition.
- We recognise the child is at the heart of all that we do. Their family and other people of significance to them are their greatest resource, we need to ensure their voice is heard. This includes being explicit about the 'bottom-line' to safeguard or protect a child. It overtly uses a 'high challenge' and 'high support' approach, which builds on strong relationship-based practice between children, families and professionals. This provides a way of working which is family led, jointly owned and created, achievable and builds sustainable change. It reduces the likelihood of dependency on professional services.
- Using restorative approaches is a key element of Dudley's ambition to become an authority that puts the child and family at the centre of what we do.
- By using these approaches we will provide staff with a range of language, behaviours and tools that strengthen their relationships with children, young people and families, empowering them to share responsibility by using a solution-focused approach, which supports positive change.

Why Restorative Practice?

In recent years, there has been a resurgence of interest in social work towards relationship-based practice. The Centre for Social Work Practice state that *“Meaningful and effective social work always entails the provision of an attuned, reflective, and professionally thoughtful relationship with service users, carers, networks, social work colleagues and colleagues from other disciplines – even under conditions of conflict. Good services are by definition services provided through, or in the context of, such relationships”*.

Over the last eight years local authorities have increasingly taken the decision to embed a single relationship and strength based methodology across children’s services’ in order to improve practice, consistency of approach and most importantly, outcomes for children and families. Some of the most commonly adopted methodologies have included:

- Systemic Family Therapy
- Signs of Safety
- Family Partnership Model
- Restorative Practice

It has been noted by Ofsted that most “Good” authorities have embedded a methodology and in Dudley’s most recent Ofsted monitoring, inspectors enquired as to Dudley’s plans in respect of adopting and embedding a practice methodology. Following exploration by the Centre for Professional Practice and an initial briefing by Mark Finnis to Heads of Service and Service Managers, Restorative Practice has been identified as the preferred model.

What is Restorative Practice?

Restorative Practice is a relationship and strength based approach that embodies a set of core beliefs, principles and a way of being with people that proactively promotes building a sense of community and developing social capital. It is a high support, high challenge model that creates a common language and a common approach to engaging families.

The rationale for recommending the adoption of Restorative Practice in Dudley is as follows:

1. Restorative Practice has a strong international and national evidence base.
2. A number of authorities have embedded the approach with several, including Leeds and Rotherham citing it as a key element of their ‘Getting to Good’ journey.
3. Authorities that have implemented the approach have achieved the high success rates with “Troubled Families” and have seen a reduction in children subject to both Child in Need and Child Protection plans. In Leeds CIN rates have reduced by up to 50%.

4. The model can be tailored to the residential care context as part of a 'Restorative Parenting' approach and is therefore suitable for our internal care homes. There is also the potential to roll-out to all Dudley foster carers as part the Fostering mandatory training.
5. The approach is not simply a model of social work practice; it is a methodology that can be easily adopted across the children's workforce presenting opportunities for a future roll-out across partners in Dudley. In Leeds embedding Restorative Practice across schools in the city contributed to an overall reduction in exclusions, an area which is a significant challenge for Dudley.
6. Restorative Practice has been adopted in both Walsall and Wolverhampton allowing for synergies in cross-borough working (including when staff move between authorities) and supporting consistency in the experiences of children and families who move across local authority boundaries.
7. Restorative Practice has been identified as a more cost-effective option than compared to other methodologies such as Signs of Safety and also includes a 'train-the-trainer' approach. This will promote sustainability of the model as we develop capacity to train 'in-house' thereby ensuring that all new staff complete Restorative Practice training as part of their induction.

Provider

The preferred provider that has been identified to deliver the training is Mark Finnis & Associates. Mark Finnis is the Director of L30 and was instrumental in developing a whole local authority approach at Sefton Centre for Restorative Practice (2002) and a city-wide approach with Hull Centre for Restorative Practice (2006-2011) and working closely with the City of Leeds to realise their vision to become a Child Friendly City (2011-2016). Since then Mark and his team have worked with numerous Children and Adults Services nationally and helped advise local and national government on practice developments and supporting research into the effectiveness of restorative and relational based practice. They have worked with a number of authorities who have improved under the Ofsted framework.

Recommended Approach

The recommendation is for all managers and frontline staff to complete the 3 day accredited programme. It is recognised that this represents a significant commitment both in terms of the time that it will take to train all staff and the financial investment. There will also clearly be challenges in terms of scheduling and releasing all staff to participate in a 3-day training course. However, it is considered that a more intensive programme of training will set Dudley on an equal footing with other local authorities and demonstrate a clear commitment to the model and our desire to invest in the workforce.

Cost

The total cost of embedding restorative practice through a full training roll-out will be dependent on the number of staff that are trained. Initial estimates suggest that if the proposal for all staff to complete the 3 day accredited training is accepted then total costs may be in the region of £80 - £90k, subject to any negotiations with the provider regarding cost/volume discounts. As the roll-out will be phased there is the potential to profile this spend across 2018/19 and 2019/20 financial years if required. It is suggested that this could be funded via a combination of the Centre for Professional Practice budget and Troubled Families innovation funding.

Proposed Roll out:

The roll out of the Restorative Practice model will be staged over three phases, each stage will be reviewed and evaluated to support the implementation of the programme. The delivery will be coordinated by the Centre for Professional Practice an a basic *illustration* of how this will work as part of a phased approach is presented below.



The impact so far

Although it is early days, the news is exciting and the Restorative Practice 'buzz' is starting to take effect amongst the workforce. Our pilot group of Children's Home Staff, the Family Group Conferencing Team and the Safeguarding and Review Service have started to implement the model into their day-to-day practice.

Our Children's home staff are keeping a log of their activities and are demonstrating examples of how they have used it with young people to resolve issues and conflict. One young person presented to Ofsted in August the impact it was having and examples of how it had been used within the home.

- Children's Home Staff member stated *"It is helping to young people to resolve differences and recognises how their behaviours impact upon others"*
- Young person stated *"It has helped me to understand how other people are feeling and has sorted out arguments"*

The Family Group Conferencing Team have been using it since July and have started to demonstrate its impact.

- A Family member stated, *"I wish the child protection conference could have been like this."*
- Ofsted reported *"Family group conferences, which use the new restorative practice model, are becoming well embedded for children in need and those on a child protection plan. Families are well prepared and are clear about what has been agreed in these meetings. Family group conference plans seen are effective, and are written in a way that ensures that families understand what they need to do to improve their children's lives"*
- A Family Support Worker *"Your hard work has made such a difference to the family."*

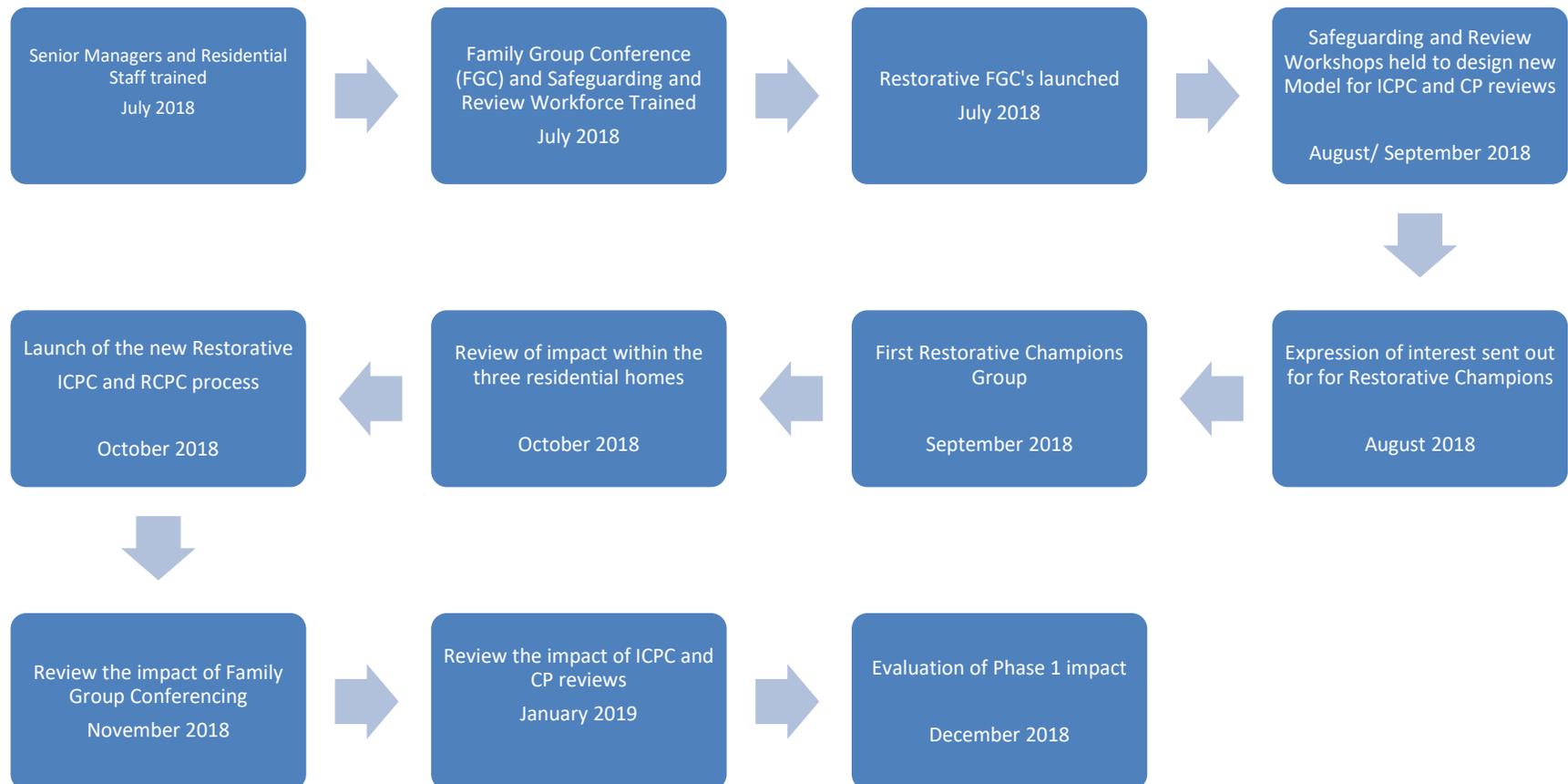
The Safeguarding and Review Service have only recently gone live with the Restorative Conference Model. However, this has resulted in a redesign of the agenda and environment, with families being spoken to first and attendees sitting in a 'circle' without tables. The chair leads the conference via interactive sessions on whiteboards focusing on high support, high challenge.

- A Health Visitor reported *"I have to write and tell you that the IRO was a credit to the service and chaired the meeting excellently. He was methodical, gave the mother time to reflect on the situation, and listened to the other members. He was also polite client and child centred. I have been health visiting for 16 years and this was far the best initial conference I have ever attended"*
- A Police Officer reported the new Restorative Conference is *'Far more visual and far more inclusive for the family'*
- An Atlantic House Worker reported *'I Love the model as it enables family to invest in their plan'*

Finally, we have a Restorative Practice Champions Group with 25 members already signed up. Moving forward these champions will promote and develop the model throughout the workforce ensuring the messages and culture changes are holistic and achieve the required impact.

APPENDIX 1

Implementation of Restorative Practice for Phase 1



APPENDIX 2

Delivery Programme:

COHORT	DATE	NUMBER	VENUE
PHASE 1			
*St James Road Staff	8 th , 9 th , 10 th May	10	Queens Cross
*Maitland Road Staff	20 th , 21 st , 22 nd June	19	Ward House
*Tipton Road Staff	9 th , 10 th , 11 th July	23	Ward House
Senior Management Group	8 th , 9 th , 10 th May	15	Ward House
IRO and FGC Group	29 th , 30 th , 31 st May	17	Ward House
<i>*Children's Home</i>			
PHASE 2			
Frontline Practitioner Group 1	22 nd , 23 rd , 24 th July	24	Ward House
Frontline Practitioner Group 2	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd August	24	Ward House
Frontline Practitioner Group 3	18 th , 19 th , 20 th September	24	Ward House
Frontline Practitioner Group 4	2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th October	24	Ward House
Frontline Practitioner Group 5	13 th , 14 th , 15 th November	24	Ward House
Frontline Practitioner Group 6	20 th , 21 st , 22 nd November	24	Ward House
Frontline Practitioner Group 7	26 th , 27 th , 28 th November	24	Ward House
Frontline Practitioner Group 8	3 rd , 4 th , 5 th December	24	Ward House
Frontline Practitioner Group 9	11 th , 12 th , 13 th December	24	Ward House
Frontline Practitioner Group 10	18 th , 19 th , 20 th December	24	Ward House
Frontline Practitioner Group 11	2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th January 2019	24	Ward House
Frontline Practitioner Group 12	15 th , 16 th , 17 th January 2019	24	Ward House
Frontline Practitioner Group 13	23 rd , 24 th , 25 th January 2019	24	Ward House
Frontline Practitioner Group 14	5 th , 6 th , 7 th February 2019	24	Ward House
Frontline Practitioner Group 14	11 th , 12 th , 13 th February 2019	24	Ward House