

Right Balance for Families Learning Workshop



13 February 2019



**A Department for Education
Innovation Fund project**

A methodology of working with children and families that builds on their existing networks and our partnerships to help them develop more resilience



Why 10-13 year old children in need?

Increasing proportion of children coming into local authority care as teenagers



Desire to reduce repeat referrals to social work as these could indicate missed opportunities for this group



Crucial importance of the transition to secondary school



Growing evidence of cumulative impact of chronic neglect



Good time to intervene according brain development

What is our project?

A family led and relationship based method

All families are offered a family group conference which will agree what needs to change, how this can be achieved and who is the best person to work directly with the child and their family which is recorded in a plan written by the family.



A team co-ordinated by the social worker

Able to develop innovative solutions to effect lasting changes for children and their families through a multi-disciplinary team including CAMHS, teachers, youth workers, mediators and mentors.



The “Virtual school” model of additional educational support

Access for children for specialist staff work with the child’s school to ensure there is additional support for their educational progress.

Why is it important? What is life like for these children?


Voice of 13 year old girl: Child 'B'

'Nobody in my family seems to notice me. I try really hard with them, but it doesn't seem to be enough. I would like to see professionals more often, and I feel frustrated that when something good happens, it never lasts.'


B has a history of not attending school; she is now very behind with her learning. B's mother has dual diagnosis of personality disorder and bi-polar. Mother is struggling to have a relationship with her daughter. B has experienced incidents of domestic violence in her early years. B has a very limited network of support around her; she feels isolated and that her situation is hopeless.

Progress made so far...


Engagement of families with Right Balance is positive so far with 64% of families agreeing to take forward a family group conference.



The Right Balance Family Group conference has been well received by both families, social workers and other professionals. As families are co-producing their goals as well as their own solutions this changes the nature of the conversation.



Family group conference coordinators report that the plans are richer with the voice of child more clearly articulated with their views, intentions and actions than when a professional has led the goal setting.



Social workers are sharing that the focus on strengths is very positive for families.

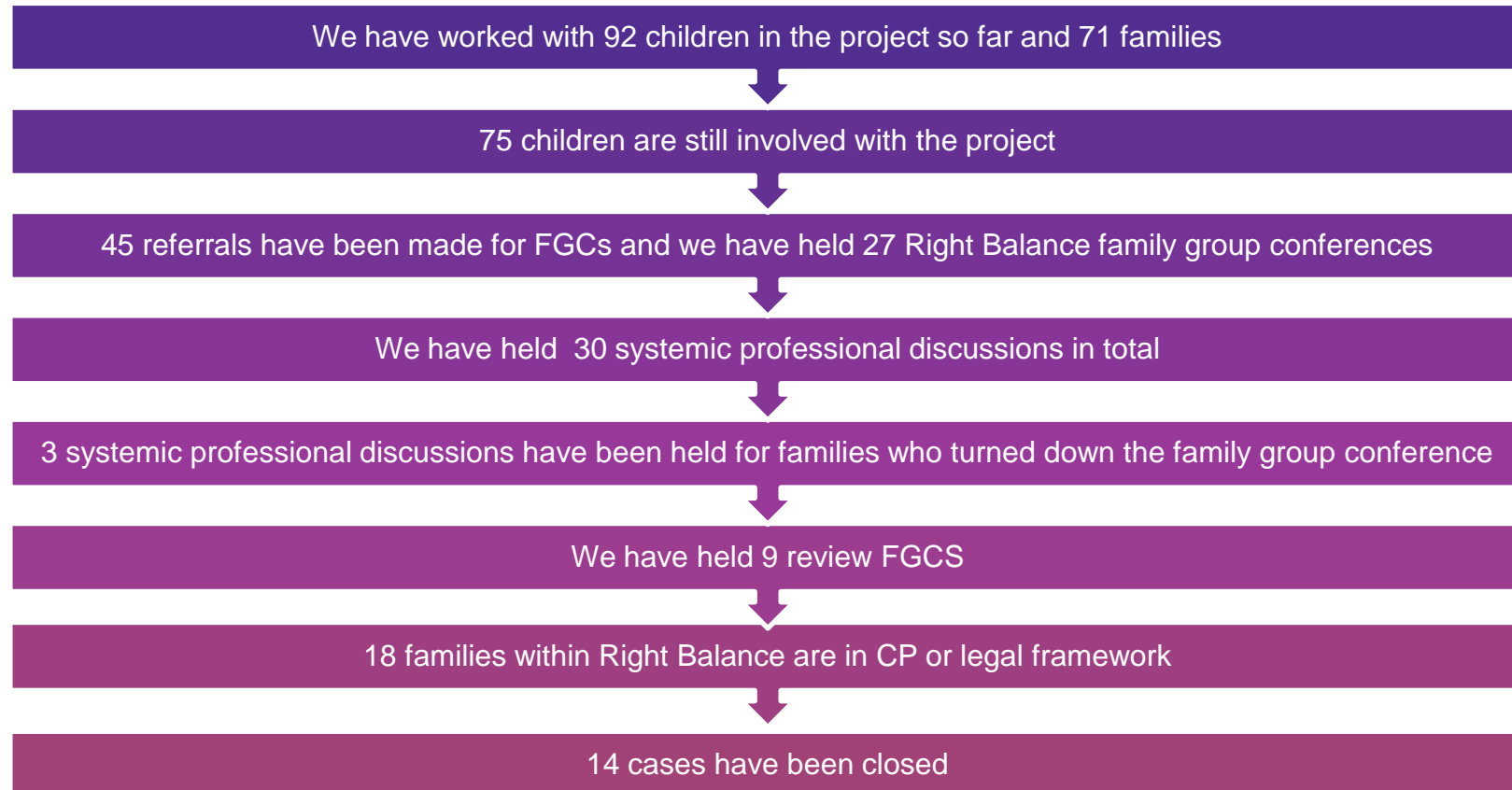
We are piloting involving families in the systemic discussions in Right Balance

I wasn't more relaxed at the start, but then it was better than other meetings. Everyone has their say and listens, I can listen more. Maybe it would help other families. I used to go home angry after these meetings, but not this time."

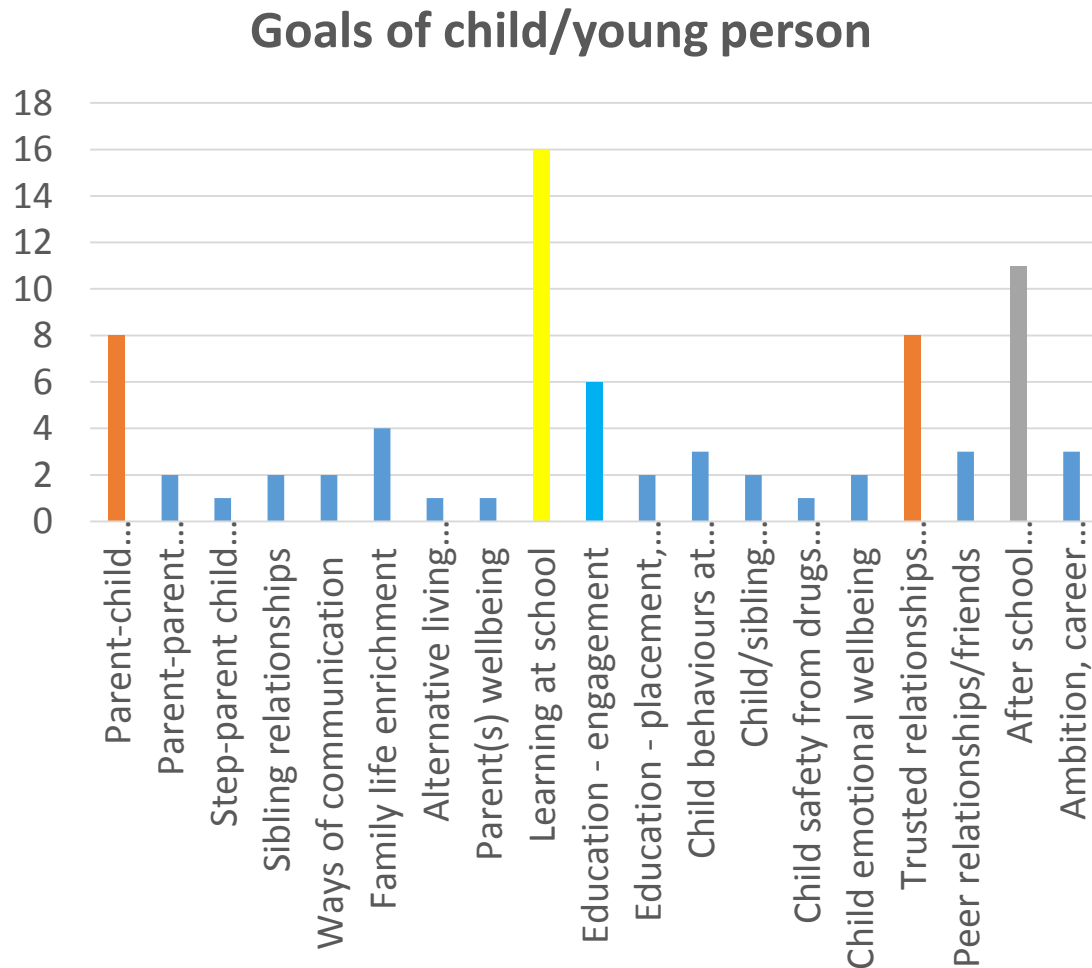
Better than any other meeting I have been to, people not going round the table judging you.

Much better than I thought it would be. People not going round the room telling you what to do, not pieces of paper. Able to listen better, more in depth talking."

The project in numbers...



What have families wanted in their plans?

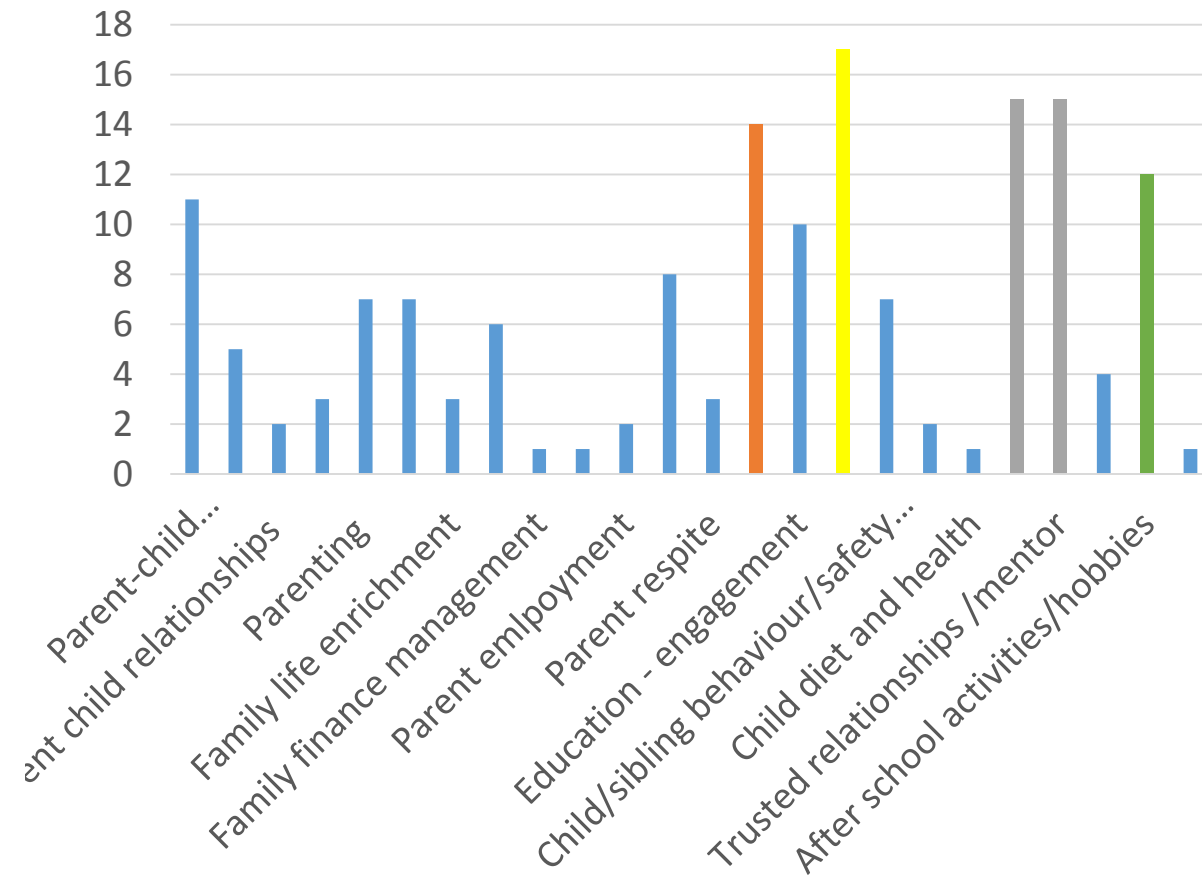


- **Learning at school** – **Half of CYP** make this goal
- **After school activities/hobbies** – **A third of CYP** make this goal
- **Trusted relationships/mentor** – **A quarter of CYP** make this goal
- **Parent child relationships** – **A quarter of CYP** make this goal
- **Education – engagement (attendance, lateness etc)** – **A fifth of CYP** make this goal

From 25 family led plans with goals made by 35 children

The goals of parents and the wider family network

Goals of the family



From 25 family led plans

- **Child behaviours at home/school** – two thirds of families make this goal
- **Child emotional wellbeing** – three fifths of families make this goal
- **Trusted relationships / mentor** – three fifth of families make this goal
- **Child learning at school** – close to three fifths of families make this goal
- **Child after school activities and hobbies** – half of families make this goal

Any questions?



The Impact on Educational Outcomes for Children in Need

Attainment and Children in Need

- **‘An attainment gap for Children in Need persists** even after accounting for the educational disadvantage associated with being on free school meals or having special educational needs.’ (DfE, March, 2018, pg. 34)
- **‘Children in Need have poor outcomes at every stage of education.** The evidence suggests that they start behind other children in the early years and the gap widens throughout school.’ (DfE, March, 2018, pg. 5).
- Educational outcomes for children in need are substantially poorer than for other pupils’ although while LAC have been examined extensively, **CIN have not** (Crenna–Jennings, 2018).

Children in Need are more likely:

- **To have special educational needs**
- **To have an EHCP**
- **To have SEMH as their special educational need**
- **To be persistently absent from school**
- **To attend special schools (DfE, March, 2018).**

Trauma

- There is significant evidence to indicate **a relationship between abuse, neglect and emotional trauma and a child's academic outcomes** (DfE, March, 2018; Boden *et al*, 2007; Jonson-Reid *et al*, 2004; Lansford *et al*, 2002; Perez & Widom, 1994; Leiter, 1997; Scott and Skidmore, 2006).
- These children may have experienced a variety of negative and trauma situations including a combination of **domestic violence, drug and alcohol dependency and mental health difficulties** (Crenna–Jennings, 2018) or the 'toxic trio' of all three (Brandon *et al* 2012).

Data Set Summary

- educational attendance and progress data collected from schools
- baseline and review SDQ data from the perspectives of the CYP and their teachers
- qualitative professionals' judgement on CYP's engagement and behaviours in education
- qualitative social workers' comments on progress of CYP education and things overall in the families
- additional social care profile data.

Summary of Cohort Change

Improved attendance	Improved progress in English and/or Maths	Improved emotional and behavioural wellbeing		Improved edu engagement and behaviours	General improvement in education	General improvement at home
School reports	School reports	Self SDQ	Teacher SDQ	VS	MOSAIC records	MOSAIC records + SW comments
29%	53%	37%	27%	82%	60%	31%
Of which 75% mirrors improved educational progress of the CYP	Of which 67% have improved attendance or maintained attendance above 80% Of which 90% reports improved emotional wellbeing or maintains normal level	Of which 100% mirrors improved educational progress of the CYP	Of which 67% mirrors improved educational progress of the CYP	Of which 63% mirrors improved educational progress of the CYP. There may be a delayed impact on educational progress.	Of which 56% mirrors improved educational progress of the CYP	Of which 50% mirrors improved educational progress of the CYP

What has worked...

- Mentoring and modelling for CIN and parent.
- EP observations, assessment and advice to schools and therapeutic support for CIN and parent.
- Transition support from primary to secondary school.
- Support for troubled parents to navigate the education, SEND, CAMHs and social care systems.
- Multi agency work to 'move things on'.
- Schools having a framework of thinking regarding trauma and attachment difficulties.

Post Right Balance – making what we learned sustainable...a few proposals...

- Some pathway that allows SWs / schools to escalate some CIN cases for support re. education.
- VS and Camden Learning promote / co-ordinate training to schools re. trauma and attachment.
- The LA to make a commitment to discourage all CIN from being educated at home and if they are to review their progress every 6 months, rather than every 12 months.
- A clear pathway for schools to escalate any child who demonstrates chronic poor or non-attendance of child that involves the LA.
- All CIN Camden children attending OOB boundary schools kept on register by LA and reviewed educationally.

AND...

- Traded Service: trained 'trauma aware' mentors available to schools and supervised by VS. Also, training for school mentors through the VS.
- Traded Service: training schools in how to run Social Skills classes.
- Work to be done around OOB CIN re. the offer of additional support from surrounding LAs. Maybe a North London agreement led by EW?
- Co-ordination between RB and mental health in schools Trailblazer for the next 12 months.



Reflective Circle on the Learning So Far