

CONFERENCE REPORT

COMMITTEE: SOCIAL WORK

SUBJECT: ARE YOUR SERVICES SAFEGUARDING
PROMOTING EFFECTIVELY THE WELFARE OF
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

CONFERENCE ORGANISER: INFOLOG TRAINING

VENUE: HOLIDAY INN, KINGS CROSS, LONDON

CONFERENCE FEE: £160

DATE(S): 13 MARCH 1997

RECOMMENDATION: NOT SUITABLE FOR MEMBERS TO ATTEND.

Are your services safeguarding and promoting effectively the welfare of children and families?

A review of practical inter-agency initiatives for needs-led, evidence-based commissioning and an outcomes-based approach to service delivery.

A conference for social services, health and education managers working together for children, organised by Infolog Training on Thursday, 13th March 1997 at Holiday Inn Kings Cross, London.

These are *critical questions* for managers and practitioners in *social services, health and education*:

- Are your services meeting the needs children and families? How do you know? Can you prove it?
- Child protection and children in need: Are you striking a balance?
- Not enough money for early intervention services? Can you afford not to commission them? Are you waiting for the evidence?
- How effective are you managing multi-agency work, assessing needs and monitoring outcomes?

There has been much debate about how best to combine child protection, family support and child welfare services, and the relative merits of early intervention.

Unfortunately, what has been lacking is *research evidence* on the effectiveness of the whole range of child welfare measures and initiatives. There is little monitoring of service delivery and almost no outcomes-based assessment.

Practitioners are crying out for findings that show clearly *what, when and how* child welfare services work best, and the necessary *robust management tools*.

These are essential for breaking down barriers and developing the political will, financial support and inter-agency collaboration required to formulate and deliver quality early intervention services.

Fortunately, research findings *are* emerging, and a number of authorities *are* developing practical and effective management methodologies for jointly assessing needs, commissioning and monitoring services, and managing risks. *They are producing innovative early intervention and family support strategies* with integrated outcome-based research components, and are gradually moving towards truly evidence-based commissioning.

Moreover, these methodologies *can* be adopted by other authorities and readily tailored to local needs.

The contributors

- * Cllr. Jeremy Fraser, Leader, Southwark Council.
- * Ian Katz, Head of Practice Development, NSPCC.
- * Nigel Harper, Director of Social Work, NE Region, NCH Action for Children.
- * Professor David Thorpe, University of Lancaster.
- * Anne Chan, Social Services, Southwark LBC.
- * Luke Geoghegan, Children & Young People, Brent LBC.
- * Jane Held, Assistant Director, Child Care, Rochdale MBC.
- * Ruth Gardner, Social Services, Hackney LBC.
- * George Normand, Chair, Devon 2000 Project, and Louise Nicols, Educational Psychologist & Special Needs Officer, Devon CC.

Who should attend?

- Directors of Social Services • Directors of Education • Directors of Children Services, Health Authorities and NHS Trusts • Chairs of Social Services • Chairs of Education • Assistant Directors, Children & Family Services • Members of Area Child Protection Panels • Child Protection Officers • Education officers. • Members of joint commissioning steering groups. • Voluntary sector service providers. • Service user groups.

The seminar aims

- to provide a thorough and full *review* of research evidence on the effectiveness of the leading approaches to child welfare in Britain today;
- to assess in-depth research-linked child welfare initiatives that present hard evidence on risks, costs and benefits over time; and
- to present clear ways forward for evidence-based commissioning of children's services, including practical management tools for identifying needs, developing services and monitoring progress.

Delegates will obtain practical advice, useful tips, check lists, action plans and good practice guidance.

Choose whether to be invoiced before or after 1st April 1997!

PROGRAMME

09.00 - 09.50 Registration and coffee 

09.50 - 10.00 Introduction

Outline of the challenges & priorities for children in need and in danger of abuse
Cllr. Jeremy Fraser, Leader, Southwark Council.

- The latest on guidance and proposals, and progress since *Messages from research* and *Seen but not heard*.
- The emerging family support agenda for members and officers from local and health authorities.

Session 1

Research findings & methodologies



10.00 - 10.30

Measuring the effectiveness of early intervention: Research to date

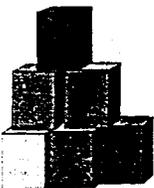
Ilan Katz, Head of Practice Development, NSPCC.

- Child welfare research programmes to date: Objectives, methodologies & relevance to local services.
- Research on the *effectiveness* of family support and child protection initiatives.
- Understanding the reasons for success and failure.
- Research to practice: using evidence to make your case.
- Measuring and comparing the performance of your children and family services.
- Setting the foundations for on-going, multi-agency evidence-based commissioning.

10.30 - 11.00

Children still in need: The findings of the ADSS project

Nigel Harper, Director of Social Work, North East Region, NCH Action for Children.



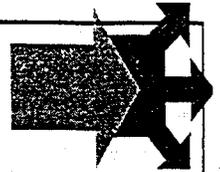
- The project's objectives and methodology.
- The emerging issues for members and officers of social services, health and education authorities.
- Defining clearly the roles of agencies working to meet jointly the needs of children and families.

- Setting realistic objectives and developing a robust case-management framework aiming at minimising risk.
- Information systems for research-based commissioning.
- Practical advice on areas for immediate action: allocation of priorities, commissioning and delivery of services, and monitoring of outcomes.
- Lessons for local authorities and voluntary agencies.

11.00 - 11.30

Towards needs-led early intervention services & evidence based commissioning

Professor David Thorpe, University of Lancaster.



- Refocusing services for children and families.
- Developing robust long-term multi-agency strategies and specifying long-term outcomes.
- Improving the effectiveness of joint working in children and family services.
- Achieving a balance between expenditure and the benefits across all partners.
- Key stages for a planned transition from reactive to needs-led early intervention services.
- The principal financial, professional and legal obstacles.
- Essential management tools: A check list.

11.30 - 12.00 Coffee 

12.00 - 12.30 Panel discussion 

12.30 - 16.40

Session 3 Case Studies

This session features five case studies of authorities that have moved towards a needs-led approach to service delivery. The presentations address:

- Making the case and *winning commitment*.
- Key political, financial, organisational & legal issues.
- Assessing needs and setting priorities.
- Research based commissioning & specifying outcomes.
- Reallocating resources.
- Monitoring and evaluating outcomes.
- The costs and benefits to date.
- Building on the strengths and addressing weaknesses.
- Practical advice for social services, education & health.

12.30 - 13.00

A 'service supermarket' approach to family support services

Luke Geoghegan, Service Development Manager, Children & Young People, London Borough of Brent.



- A policy change to deliver services under a 'service supermarket' approach.
- Funding strategy and project monitoring.
- The implications for the authority and other agencies.
- Evaluation techniques to ensure efficient family support service and effective resource deployment.
- The measured outcomes in terms of quality and costs.
- Practical advice on what can be done *now* towards best joint working practice in the medium and long terms.

13.00 - 14.00 Lunch



14.00 - 14.30

Lessons from Rochdale's approach to family support services

Jane Held, Assistant Director, Child Care, Rochdale MBC.

- Why refocusing children services?
- What options were considered?
- Political and financial obstacles encountered.
- Performing needs-led assessment.
- The importance of mapping needs and resources and inter agency collaboration.
- The benefits and costs of the current approach and the future plans.
- Lessons for other authorities and agencies.

14.30 - 15.00

Needs assessment methodologies

Anne Chan, Assistant Director, Social Services, London Borough of Southwark.

- The methodologies: Their strengths and weaknesses.
- *Defining* needs, significant harm and the legal issues.
- A multi-agency needs assessment process: addressing the key issues and overcoming the obstacles.
- From identified needs to setting service priorities and specifying clear outcomes and thresholds.

- Monitoring and evaluating outcomes.
- Effective information management.
- How *you* can develop your needs assessment methodology: A check list.

15.00 - 15.15 Comfort break

15.15 - 15.45

One stop access for family support services

Ruth Gardner, Social Services, London Borough of Hackney.



- Use of one stop access for a range of services.
- Joint service planning and the agencies involved.
- What benefits have been achieved by service users and the authority?
- Systems for monitoring effectiveness of family support services.
- Funding and needs-led budgeting.
- What additional training was required by social workers?
- What lessons can be learnt from this approach?

15.45 - 16.15

The Child Care Devon 2000 Project

John Randall, Head of Child Care Policy, and Louise Nicols, Educational Psychologist & Special Needs Officer, Devon County Council.

- Background to the project. e.g. methodology used.
- What are the implications for the authority and users of shifting services towards primary and secondary levels of activity?
- The need for achieving a balance between safeguarding and promoting needs-led children services.
- Moving from safeguarding to prevention, the effects on: purchaser and provider relationship, finances and other resources, and information systems.
- Using information systems to specify needs and service response levels.
- What have been the actual benefits to date of the Devon project?

16.15 - 16.45 Panel discussion

16.45 Close

Please subscribe my authority to the conference on:
Are your services safeguarding & promoting effectively the welfare of children and families?
 organised by Infolog Training on Thursday, 13th March 1997
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A diversionary approach to youth crime
A critical analysis of current multi agency initiatives & practical ways forward

Seminar organised by Infolog Training
 on Thursday, 6th March 1997
 at the Holiday Inn Kings Cross, London WC1X 9HX.
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Seminar subscription fee: £160+VAT.
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➤ The causes & effects of youth crime ➤ Measuring the relative effectiveness of punishment & diversion ➤ Making the case for diversion: Addressing the political & financial issues ➤ Diversion initiatives in the context of community safety strategies & police action plans ➤ Practical methodologies for formulating effective diversion measures, including community involvement, monitoring & evaluation.

Speakers
 ➤ Nalini Varma, Chief Executive, The Rainer Foundation. ➤ David Utting, Advisor, Rowntree Foundation. ➤ Jon Bright, Director of Field Operations, Crime Concern. ➤ Dennis Simpson, Director of Social Services, London Borough of Southwark, and Chair, Inner London Chief Officers Youth Justice Initiative. ➤ Roger King, Chief Probation Officer, North Yorkshire Probation Service, and Lead Officer for Youth Justice, Association of Chief Officers of Probation. ➤ Barry Anderson, Head of Youth Crime Section, NACRO. *PLUS Case Study presentations from Social Services, Education, Police Probation and Voluntary Sector officers.*

☑ Directors and Chairs of Social Services, Education, and Leisure Services. ☑ Youth Justice Officers, Policy Officers, Education Welfare Officers, Social Workers and Youth Workers. ☑ Community Safety Officers and Safer Cities Officers. ☑ Probation Officers. ☑ Police Juvenile Liaison Officers ☑ Members of Police Authorities ☑ Voluntary sector representatives.