

"IN THE LOOP"

VOL. 7 | APRIL 2022

# RELATIONSHIPS MATTER

THE NORTH EAST'S REDUCING PARENTAL CONFLICT PROGRAMME (RPCP)



**THANK YOU  
FOR YOUR  
SUPPORT**

**OVER THE LAST  
THREE YEARS**

Referrals to the pilot Relationships Matter programme in the North East ended on 31 March 2022, and we would like to thank each and every practitioner who has referred parents onto this groundbreaking programme.

We have learned a lot, and we have outlined some of this learning inside, which we hope you will find useful. This covers the Gateway role, Parenting When Separated, Mentalisation Based Therapy and The Incredible Years Advanced. We have not included Family Check Up as so few families chose this intervention.

**Welcome to the final monthly bulletin  
for Front Line Practitioners**

**WE WOULD LOVE  
YOUR FEEDBACK ON  
THE PROGRAMME**

*See the back page for the chance to  
win a £20 shopping voucher!*

**Relationships Matter**



# A MESSAGE FROM THE GATEWAY



*Gemma Ozap-Marshall, Gateway  
Co-ordinator, Gateshead Council*

**Our Relationships Matter Programme Gateway closed to referrals onto the pilot programme at the end of March, after an incredible three years of supporting parents and carers with their communication, relationships and co-parenting skills.**

We have learned so much over the past three years, especially the importance of asking parents about their relationship, and providing them with the relational support they need. We know that inter-parental relationships, regardless of whether parents are together or separated, has a huge influence on the long-term

chances of children and young people.

Ongoing, unresolved parental conflict can affect children's emotional wellbeing and mental health, along with their ability to engage and thrive in education. Therefore, it is crucial that practitioners like ourselves, who support families, ask those curious questions.

The Gateway has supported practitioners to make over 1900 referrals in the North East. This is a huge achievement and something we are very proud of. So, I would like to say a massive "THANK YOU" to you; for your continued support and belief in the programme, which has enabled us to reach this incredible milestone. Parents referred up to the end of March will continue to work with our providers and complete their specialist interventions by the end of July 2022.

Although the Relationships Matter Programme delivery is coming to a close, the agenda for Reducing Parental Conflict has not, and relational practice should continue to be embedded within our every-day work.

Moving forward, our local authorities have been granted funding through a Work Force Development Grant to continue embedding relational practice, and to offer parents specialist support which will improve outcomes for children. Part of my role over the next six months is going to be establishing and embedding pathways of support within our local authorities, building on what we've learned from the Relationships Matter Programme.

Our Gateway remains fully open to continue supporting you with case discussions, triage, and general relationship support. This is something we know has worked so well throughout the Relationships Matter Programme, and has been key to ensuring referrals have been made at the right time for parents. Any referrals made to the Gateway will be re-routed through to the correct local authority and points of contact.

Please see the back page for contact details, and we look forward to hearing from you!

“ Asking those curious questions, and allowing parents the opportunity to share how things are within the relationship, is the first step in reducing parental conflict. ”

# Sharing a little of what the RPC Partnership in the North East has learned

## Parenting When Separated (PWS) 6 Group Sessions

- Separated parents are in separate groups, and whilst they can be run at separate times, it is better if groups run concurrently, so parents are both learning skills at the same time.
- High disengagement rate (30% of referrals started the intervention)
- Very high completion rate once started (almost 80% of parents completed after attending session 1)
- To save on funding, send the PWS workbooks out to parents after they have attended session 1
- Dads and male carers particularly like this intervention – they are happy to be heard
- To have **at least** five parents in each group, try to recruit thirty all together
- Run one group in the day time, and one in the evening or at a weekend
- Running three groups from one cohort at different times of the day or at weekends helps keep parents engaged
- Delivering online means you can recruit from a wider geographical area (helpful for rural areas like Northumberland or County Durham)

## The Referral Gateway

- Case discussions are vital, allowing practitioners an opportunity to have a conversation with a relational practitioner about their cases.
- Having a triage procedure in place ensures parents are accessing the correct support for them and that it is safe.
- Referral pathways such as an RSQ is the first step in reducing parental conflict as you are providing parents with an opportunity to reflect on their relationship.

## Mentalisation Based Therapy (MBT) 9 Couple Sessions

- Works best with intact couples
- Can work well with separated parents if they are able to work together, but you may require additional sessions as this is more challenging.
- Higher start rate than PWS (64% started the intervention)
- But a lower completion rate than PWS (54% completed after attending session 1)
- More flexible than group work in terms of when sessions are delivered
- Works well online or face-to-face

## The Incredible Years Advanced 12 Couple or Group Work Sessions

This intervention faced difficulties in the first year, and only four parents completed. However, following changes, agreed by the intervention owner after lockdown, we were able to engage many more parents:

- Parents do not need to have completed the twelve-week basic course
- Parents can do the sessions individually, rather than in a group
- This intervention works best for intact couples
- We don't have data on the disengagement rate, but the completion rate is very high (73% completed after attending session 1)
- The intervention works well online and face-to-face, and both are being delivered currently.
- Couples prefer the individual support to group sessions.
- Parents have found the vignettes really helpful to promote discussion around communication.



# YOUR CHANCE TO WIN A £20 SHOPPING VOUCHER

We would love to hear from you about your experiences of the programme. To complete this five-minute survey, please click [here](#).  
The Prize-Draw will be drawn on **19.04.22**

If you would like to discuss how we can continue to support parents, please contact us:

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*The Relationships Matter interventions are delivered in the North East by Relate, Changing Futures North East (in the Tees Valley), and Action for Children Ltd., and funded by the Department for Work and Pensions*