



STRENGTHENING PRACTICE®
DEVELOPING SKILLED AND VIBRANT PROFESSIONALS

Workforce Development Programmes

Developing skilled and vibrant professionals



Balanced
practice
frameworks to
empower your
workforce



STRENGTHENING PRACTICE

DEVELOPING SKILLED AND VIBRANT PROFESSIONALS

Welcome to Strengthening Practice. For the past 15 years, we have been working closely with practitioners across a wide range of service areas and local authorities, supporting continuing professional development within the workplace through coaching, action learning sets, seminars and workshops on core skills, developing policy and procedures, and capturing information about what matters most for children and families.

Training and practice improvement in the social care sector is the principal focus of Strengthening Practice. We design and provide customised training programmes guiding staff through legislative and conceptual frameworks in order to understand how this knowledge applies to: the practical daily activities within the context of their organisation; their local policies and procedures; and the children, young people and families they support. We do this by providing practitioners with an opportunity to reflect on and strengthen their core skillset based on the overarching PCF framework, social work knowledge and skills statements, legislation and evidence-based practice – each topic building on the last.

Whilst seminars and workshops are important traditional training methods, our aim is to help build excellence within the workforce. We supplement the classroom learning with an additional toolkit comprising: case

clinics and reflective discussions; coaching sessions; action learning sets; learning diaries and action logs; and networking tutorials. All participants receive high quality, comprehensive handbooks and practice tools.

Strengthening Practice is a member of the UK Register of Learning Providers and UK CPD. All trainers are registered social workers with their relevant professional body (e.g. Social Work England) and have recent practice experience in the field. Two of our trainers - Jo Fox and Gerry Nosowska - are associates of Research in Practice (RiP).

We offer the following successful and well-received workforce development programmes:

- **Strengthening Practice Programme**
- **Strengthening Managers Programme**
- **Strengthening Leadership Programme**
- **Strengthening Relational Practice Programme**
- **Early Help Programme**
- **Strengthening Care Programme**
- **Coaching and Wellbeing Programme**

These programmes are available in both Children's Social Care and Adult Social Care.

Jo Fox
Managing Director



The Strengthening Practice Programme

The Strengthening Practice Programme is designed to support your social care practitioners to improve the lives of children, young people and families by applying evidence-informed best practice in their work.

We'll help your team put their new knowledge into practice, promoting critical thinking and analysis, good decision making and working in partnership. The Strengthening Practice programme aligns with the KSS and PCF frameworks and all the modules support your practitioners to track and provide evidence as their skills progress.



**“This programme gives
your team the tools to
excel in their practice and
make helpful, confident
and defensible decisions”**

**Pete Fox - Director of Business
Operations**



STRENGTHENING PRACTICE PROGRAMME



Aim

The Strengthening Practice programme gives your team the tools to excel in their practice and make helpful, confident and defensible decisions to empower children, young people and their families.

Tools and Learning Formats

The programme is completely flexible – we'll work closely with senior

management to design the courses so that the skills staff will gain directly address the needs of your organisation. The programme consists of seven customisable modules, each delivered through Seminars, Workshops and individual Action Learning Sets, supported by high-quality learning and reference materials.

Practical and focused on 'what works' according to the latest evidence-based research, the programme accommodates multiple learning styles so none of your team will be left behind. Ideally, the programme runs over an extended period of 12-18 months to allow your staff to learn, rehearse, do, review and do again in the workplace – ensuring the knowledge is retained and leads to tangible improvements in their work.

Content and Structure of the Programme

Seminars

Designed for audiences of up to 60 people, our Seminars bring together the leaders of your organisation with national knowledge leaders. Together, we highlight the latest developments in evidence-based research nationally and put this in context locally in a way that resonates with people on the front lines in your organisation. The Seminars help your team understand why you've commissioned the training and what is expected of them, building mutual respect and trust so that they leave enthusiastic and inspired to put their new skills to work.

Workshops

Workshops are a space for smaller groups to reflect on what they've learnt in the seminars and how it can inform their work. We ensure your team understands

the relevance of everything they've learnt – and how to apply it to their casework to improve children's lives. Participants share knowledge and research with our trainers and acquire new skills and toolkits they can apply to their own practice. It's a safe environment where your staff can plan and rehearse the improvements they'll be putting into practice.

Action Learning Sets

Once your team clearly understand what they'll be doing differently, we track improvements in their practice through personal learning diaries. None of your staff are left behind – trainers regularly check in to support participants as they integrate their new knowledge into their practice. Participants also access high-quality learning resources and reference materials to reinforce their knowledge and make sure it results in lasting changes in your organisation. Our individual focus builds up the self-confidence required to process challenge and the trust required to address any individual issues – so everyone feels safe to put their new skills into practice.

Evaluation

Through every step of the process, you'll have a detailed view of what your team is learning, and how successfully it's being applied to drive improvements in practice. Following each module, we obtain detailed feedback from participants and facilitators, and we encourage organisations to discuss this with us throughout the training. We'll also help you to notice any barriers to change and support you to overcome these, using:

- **pre- and post-course questionnaires allowing self-assessment of change in knowledge, skills and confidence;**
- **feedback from participants via session evaluation forms;**
- **feedback from facilitators and examples from coaching; and**
- **six-month internal Council review of impact.**

Independent evaluation of the programme is also available, supported by a week of targeted focus group workshops with your team. This gives you a detailed report summarising and analysing the positives and negatives, how well the programme appears to be meeting your objectives and goals, and areas for future improvement – producing detailed and authoritative evidence of the impact of the training on your organisation.

2
days

Strengthening Assessment



Helps your frontline staff to use critical thinking, defensible decision making and hypothesising as tools to help them apply evidence-based research and knowledge to their assessment work. Your team will be better equipped to

identify and manage risk and 'show their working out' to help trainers and supervisors understand their decision-making process and keep records you'll find useful.

The workshops introduce evidence-based tools such as the **Risk and Resilience Matrix**, the **Graded Care Profile**, the **Hypothesis Tree** and the **Impact on the Child Chart** to help your practitioners make confident and sound judgements in their assessment work.

2
days

Strengthening Planning



Helps your social workers and support staff to plan meaningful short, medium and long term interventions for all children and young people including those in need, in care and leaving care.

When your team identifies risk, they'll have an evidence-based toolkit they can draw on to confidently design helpful interventions that can make a positive difference. The interventions are based on **SMART planning**, focused on the repair and restoration of children, young people and their families. The module includes work on building the Secure Base described by Schofield, and use of the NSPCC Reunification Framework.

2
days

Strengthening Parenting Capacity



Helps your team to work well with parents to increase parenting responsibility and responsiveness to their children. Your practitioners will enhance their understanding of capability to parent and the importance of making changes within the

child's timeframe. Rehearsing and strengthening their skills in observing parent-child interactions and planning how to use this to drive improvements in their practice,

participants learn about the latest evidence-based research about **'what works'** to support parents. Your workers will gain useful new tools including motivational interviewing techniques, a strengths-based approach to working with families and using the Galinsky model of parenting.

2
days

Strengthening Communication



Helps your team communicate successfully with children, young people and their families. Better communication is key to strengthening every aspect of your team's practice. They'll learn to practise

mindfully, measure their words and build a relationship through communication. What are we offering in return for a child's words, feelings and fears? Children need to understand where their words will end up – where their world will end up as a result of the difficult conversations we ask them to have. Stronger communication skills will make your team more confident and effective in every aspect of their work.

1
day

2
days

Strengthening Recording



Helps your practitioners and support staff to implement best practice in recording, including guidance from research and peak bodies like Ofsted. We'll help your team to deeply understand the importance of

accurate and compliant records to the children and young people they work with, to them, and to your organisation. Participants will look at the ethics and the importance of recording as well as the legislative requirements for record keeping and data protection. Different versions of the module are available for specific audiences (such as foster carers, for example).



2 days

Strengthening Attachment



By better understanding the theory of attachment and recognising relevant behaviours in children, young people and adults, your team will strengthen their strategies for improving attachment behaviour and

building strong relationships. They'll also learn about the **Attachment Regulation and Competency model in parenting**, providing them with an evidence-based framework for understanding attachment and making a real difference in cases where it is a factor.

2 days

Strengthening Supervision for Managers



Helps support managers to consider the purpose of supervision, identify their strengths and difficulties and reflect on their role within the organisation and their team. Managers will learn new strategies to manage poor or under-performance of staff and

how to get the most out of their own supervision. This course is informed by work carried out by Jo Fox on the Research in Practice (RiP) Supervision Change Project – to help managers understand how their work can most effectively make a difference to children's lives; as well as the Practice Supervisor Development Programme.

1 day

Strengthening supervision for Supervisees

This module accompanies Strengthening Supervision for Managers and helps your team to get the most out of their supervision and to increase responsiveness to, and responsibility for, supervision.



What our attendees say...

“Thank you for your insight, wisdom, knowledge and humour – it was an enjoyable two-day training programme”

“I feel confident going away trying different things – course very inspirational”

“I felt the presenter’s pace of delivery was pitched really well, allowing time for discussion with peers and reflection to aid understanding of subject matter”



“A comprehensive and well-considered development programme for practitioners and managers is equipping staff with new skills to improve practice and management grip.”

On Rochdale’s overall staff development programme to which Strengthening Practice contributed.

Ofsted focused inspection visit to Rochdale Borough Council children’s services, February 2019

The Strengthening Managers Programme

The Strengthening Managers Programme is designed to support your first-line managers as they nurture their team's resilience and emotional intelligence while improving their performance and enhancing their skills.

Confident and empowered managers will help deliver the vision and goals that drive your organisation and directorate – improving the experience and outcomes of children, adults and families you work with.

Your managers will strengthen their own practice, while acting as leaders and models for their team. We'll strengthen the skills and knowledge your first-line managers will draw on, supporting your team as they bring about positive changes in your organisation and in the lives of those they serve.



Focus on children, adults and families.
Clear expectations and accountability.
Work that focuses on outcomes, not outputs.
Professional judgement through critically reflective practice.
Defensible decision making.
Flexibility, prioritising and proactive self-management in a changing environment.
Constructive challenge and support for improvement.
Continuous learning and development.
Emotionally intelligent practice.
Cultivating positive relationships both internally and with other agencies.

Content and Structure

The course consists of three modules – each one makes use of **workshops**, **action learning sessions** and individual **action plans** and **coaching**. This multi-step learning supports your first-line managers as they

put their knowledge into practice. Learning is precisely matched to your team's exact needs, informed by **360-degree feedback** – detailed information including self-assessment and independent feedback from peers, staff and senior managers. The Strengthening Managers programme gives you and your first-line managers a clear view of where improvements are needed and the tools and knowledge required to make these changes a reality.

Evaluation

The programme provides a detailed and multi-faceted understanding of how your first-line managers can better support your team in their work. The programme incorporates **360-degree feedback**: detailed information from peers, staff and senior managers that includes positive and negative points, provided independently. It's an incredibly valuable resource that helps you to provide support where it's needed, and ensure new knowledge leads to tangible and measurable improvements in practice. We provide you with a diagnostic learning needs analysis at the beginning and end of the programme and gather feedback in follow-ups with participants and surveys of staff. This ensures you can see a tangible and measurable impact on your organisation, providing support to identify and overcome any obstacles to lasting positive change. Participants themselves also provide direct evidence of actions they've put into practice as a result of the learning and the impact this has on their work and on your organisation.



Strengthening Self

Diagnostic learning needs analysis preparation exercise

Workshop (with breakout for children's and adults' managers)

Feedback and action learning sessions

Strengthening self-action plan

Individual follow-up

Feedback from a survey of peers reflecting on changes in practice



Strengthening Staff

Diagnostic learning needs analysis

Workshops

Feedback and action learning sessions

Strengthening staff action plan individual follow-up

Feedback from a survey of staff reflecting on the impact of changes for them



Strengthening Organisation

Diagnostic learning needs analysis

Joint session with breakout for children's and adults' managers

Feedback and action learning sessions

Strengthening organisation action plan (telephone follow-up)

Feedback from senior managers to help understand the impact of the programme on the organisation

The Strengthening Leadership Programme

This programme is designed specifically to help Social Work Leadership and Management teams in your organisation to make a positive difference in the lives of children, young people and families.

It is completely customised and designed from the ground up to deliver support where you need it most. With 20 masterclasses available, we'll construct a programme in close consultation with leaders in your organisation to build upon the concepts covered in the **Strengthening Managers programme**.





Aim

We begin by helping you to identify the precise areas where refreshed knowledge can contribute to improvements in how leaders direct your organisation. Next, we support your leaders to put these plans into action using the latest evidence on what works. From developing a supportive leadership style to using data to improve practice, each module will inspire and empower leaders to make positive changes in your organisation and in the lives of those they serve.

360-degree feedback and one-on-one diagnostic

The programme gives you a detailed and comprehensive view of where support is needed in your organisation. For every module, leaders can access



360-degree feedback that includes self-assessment along with feedback from staff, managers and peers, gathered through an independent assessment method. We share this feedback through a one-on-one session that gives leaders valuable insights

into how they are performing and how their actions are viewed by others in the workplace.

Based on this feedback, we'll give leaders in your organisation access to subject area experts and national thought leaders for each module they pursue, providing them with individual support to help them make their plans for improvement a reality.

Masterclasses

Masterclasses last for three hours and are facilitated by an expert in the subject area. They provide leaders in your organisation with practical insights into the latest evidence on what actually works to drive change. They provide space for leaders to reflect and plan how to put their new knowledge into practice – how they can make a real difference in your organisation and in their region.

Individual Coaching Sessions

Each participating leader in your organisation receives personal, individual coaching sessions that help them follow through on their plans to drive tangible improvements in your organisation and the work it delivers. Held following the feedback session and at least three masterclasses, these sessions are a chance to broaden leadership and management thinking even further. It's a chance for leaders to reflect on new ideas on how they can work within their position to support your staff to make a real difference in the lives of children and young people.

Evaluation

At every stage of the training, we'll collaborate closely with you and your team to bring together feedback from course participants and facilitators and share it with you. Together we'll observe how effectively knowledge from the course is leading to positive change in your organisation. We'll continuously assess and discuss with you the efficacy of the training, identifying any obstacles to improvements and tailoring the course as we go to make sure it's meeting your exact needs.

“Together we'll observe how effectively knowledge from the course is leading to positive change in your organisation”.

1 Introduction to the Leadership Programme

An introduction to the programme where participants learn about the content of the modules they'll undertake and reflect on the motivation for change – encouraging them to visualise your organisation working well and achieving its goals.

2 Developing a good practice leadership style

This masterclass explores the principles which make good and effective leaders. With a focus on the internal drivers and external factors that enable change, leaders of your organisation will reflect on how their leadership style can contribute to tangible improvements in the lives of children, young people and families.

3 Consolidating your value base

This topic centres on the fundamental values that drive and unite social workers and their leaders. Participants learn how to shape a leadership style that is in tune with the values of your organisation – and the way this approach informs how to communicate and manage others.

4 Creating an environment for practice to grow



Leaders explore strategies for creating the right organisational conditions for success. Looking at the factors that help and hinder change within organisations, leaders then explore how to harness these tendencies to grow and improve the work your organisation delivers and its positive impact on people's lives.

5 Engaging and influencing staff



Building on the previous three masterclasses, this topic looks at creating opportunities to engage and influence staff, communicating the vision through shared values and ensuring everyone knows what to expect, what's expected of them and how they can contribute to improvements in your organisation.

6 Supervising to improve practice



This is a practical masterclass that helps your managers and leaders to create the right conditions for reflective supervision. The coursework focuses on establishing a collective view of what good supervision looks and feels like in your organisation – supporting participants as they focus on what

kinds of improvements they can make to drive tangible improvements in how your team works together and works with children and young people.

7 The five steps to creating a coaching culture

We share a new five-step coaching approach with your leaders and managers, helping to develop a leadership and management style that revolves around motivating and supporting your staff to improve.

8 How to improve practice when the conditions are not working

This masterclass explores how diagnostics can help identify where practice needs to be improved in your organisation – and how to respond when facing obstacles where the conditions aren't allowing that positive change.

9 Developing an emotionally resilient workforce



Your management team has a vital role to play in cultivating a resilient workforce. Participants will explore the push and pull factors that impact individual and group resilience and reflect on the changes they can put in place to improve the resilience of your team.

10 Using data to improve practice

This practical masterclass looks at how you can best use organisational data to drive real positive change in how you deliver services. The discussion focuses on how you can harness data to measure change and build the conditions that enable well-informed practitioners to constantly improve their practice and the services your organisation delivers.

11 Live case auditing

The live case file auditing masterclass examines a real case from within your organisation, exploring the case file through the eyes of an auditor. This helps your leaders and managers ensure they have a complete grip on all aspects of the case, looking for opportunities to improve, examples of good practice, and considering every stage of the process through the eyes of the child.

12 Peer auditing

This topic involves a practical session where your leaders and managers learn the concepts and skills to implement peer auditing. The masterclass will help your organisation benefit from a collective approach to accountability with mutual support between peers.

13 Observing practice



This practical masterclass explores methods for making accurate, reflective observations of practice. This strengthens your leaders' and managers' capacity to understand where support is needed and helps them to confidently assess the impact of their plans for improving how your organisation delivers services.

14 The use of the lived experience and research in shaping practice



A helpful update on the latest knowledge around effective social work practice – revolving around how the child's own lived experience should inform and shape the practice of others. This masterclass helps your managers and leaders to understand the work your organisation is doing from every angle, including, most importantly, from the perspective of the people you serve.

15 Maintaining the grip on frontline practice



This masterclass helps your leaders and managers to keep a tight grip on the reality experienced by frontline practitioners. This builds trust and mutual respect and understanding within your organisation and informs leadership decisions that are in tune with the experiences of your team.

16 Building an accepted risk management culture



Provides helpful strategies for your leaders to work on building a culture where your team understands and accepts, at every level of your organisation, the importance of managing risk.

17 Developing an accountable workforce

This masterclass challenges your leaders and managers to take actions that will help your organisation to develop a culture of constant learning, reflection and accepted accountability – from your frontline practitioners and support staff to the top of your organisation.

18 Understanding the tensions between social work practice and local government organisations

This topic helps your leaders and managers to explore and understand the tensions that arise around social work practices within a local government organisation. It's a chance for participants to reflect and share knowledge on the opportunities and challenges this presents for your organisation – and consider how to work within these dynamics to achieve positive changes that impact on your team and those you serve.

19 The political influencer inside us

We'll help the leaders and managers in your organisation to develop a leadership style sensitive to its influence on the political aspects of practice in your workplace. They'll learn new ways to understand how this interacts with those who influence their own work and the work of your team. Deepening their understanding of the political factors that influence your organisation will empower them to make decisions that impact on your team and the children and young people you work with.

20 Reflecting on your own leadership style

This masterclass introduces useful tools that enable ongoing reflection on leadership style, allowing participants to confidently continue to develop and improve their leadership and management styles, responding to changes in your organisation and driving ongoing improvements that make a long-term impact on how you work.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING PACKAGES



Growing Confident Leaders

6-masterclass programme

Leadership Summit

Introduction to the Leadership Programme

Masterclass 1

1	Developing a good practice leadership style Masterclass 2
2	Consolidating your value base Masterclass 3
3	Engaging and influencing staff Masterclass 5
4	Understanding the tensions between social work practice and local government organisations Masterclass 18
5	The political influencer inside us Masterclass 19
6	Reflecting on your leadership style Masterclass 20



Growing Confident Leaders

12-masterclass programme

Leadership Summit

Introduction to the Leadership Programme

Masterclass 1

1	Developing a good practice leadership style Masterclass 2
2	Consolidating your value base Masterclass 3
3	Creating an environment for practice to grow Masterclass 4
4	Engaging and influencing staff Masterclass 5
5	How to improve practice when conditions are not working Masterclass 8
6	Developing an emotionally resilient workforce Masterclass 9
7	Using data to improve practice Masterclass 10
8	Building an accepted risk management culture Masterclass 16
9	Developing an accountable workforce Masterclass 17
10	Understanding the tensions between social work practice and local government organisations Masterclass 18
11	The political influencer inside us Masterclass 19
12	Reflecting on your leadership style Masterclass 20



Strengthening Management Grip

6-masterclass programme

Leadership Summit

Introduction to the Leadership Programme

Masterclass 1

1	Consolidating your value base Masterclass 3
2	Using data to improve practice Masterclass 10
3	Live case auditing Masterclass 11
4	Peer auditing Masterclass 12
5	Observing practice Masterclass 13
6	The use of the lived experience and research in shaping practice Masterclass 14



Strengthening Management Grip

12-masterclass programme

Leadership Summit

Introduction to the Leadership Programme

Masterclass 1

1	Consolidating your value base Masterclass 3
2	Creating an environment for practice to grow Masterclass 4
3	Supervising to improve practice Masterclass 6
4	The five steps to creating a coaching culture Masterclass 7
5	Developing an emotionally resilient workforce Masterclass 9
6	Using data to improve practice Masterclass 10
7	Live case auditing Masterclass 11
8	Peer auditing Masterclass 12
9	Observing practice Masterclass 13
10	The use of the lived experience and research in shaping practice Masterclass 14
11	Developing an accepted risk management culture Masterclass 16
12	Developing an accountable workforce Masterclass 17



Working in an Organisation

6-masterclass programme

Leadership Summit

Introduction to the Leadership Programme **Masterclass 1**

1	Creating an environment for practice to grow Masterclass 4
2	Maintaining the grip on frontline practice Masterclass 15
3	Developing an accepted risk management culture Masterclass 16
4	Developing an accountable workforce Masterclass 17
5	Understanding the tensions between social work practice and local government organisations Masterclass 18
6	The political influencer inside us Masterclass 19



Working in an Organisation

12-masterclass programme

Leadership Summit

Introduction to the Leadership Programme **Masterclass 1**

1	Consolidating your value base Masterclass 3
2	Creating an environment for practice to grow Masterclass 4
3	Engaging and Influencing staff Masterclass 5
4	The five steps to creating a coaching culture Masterclass 7
5	How to improve practice when conditions are not working Masterclass 8
6	Developing an emotionally resilient workforce Masterclass 9
7	Using data to improve practice Masterclass 10
8	Maintaining the grip on frontline practice Masterclass 15
9	Developing an accepted risk management culture Masterclass 16
10	Developing an accountable workforce Masterclass 17
11	Understanding the tensions between social work practice and local government organisations Masterclass 18
12	The political influencer inside us Masterclass 19



What our attendees say...

"I find the tools and models most useful as a fairly new manager. I valued the training and time to reflect with my peers about the difficult job we do."

"Managing risk in my role as a manager - helping my team understand more about managing."

"Good to reflect and remind about theory and to take stock of our own practice."



"Being more mindful of the roles within my own team and how this affects performance. Using the feedback model to push back to senior management on getting feedback."



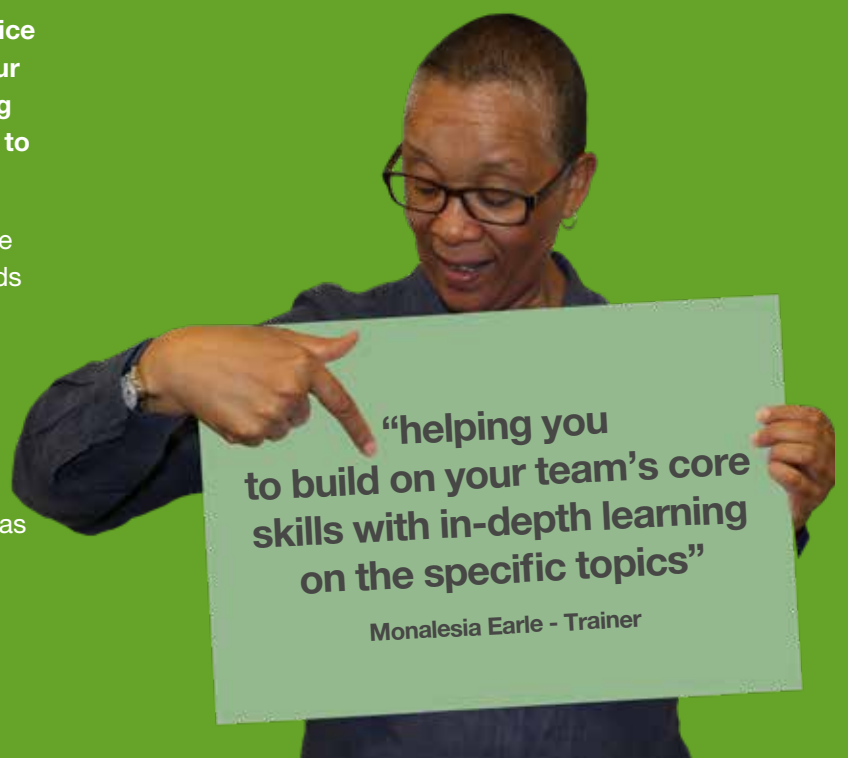
**STRENGTHENING
LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME**

The Strengthening Relational Practice Programme

This programme has been designed to follow on from the Strengthening Practice programme, helping you to build on your team's core skills with in-depth learning on the specific topics that matter most to your case-holding practitioners.

Focused on real cases from your work, the course encourages an approach that builds great practice around the relationships between professionals and the children, young people and families they serve.

We'll work closely with you to develop the content of the course, based on a collaborative assessment of the exact areas that most need attention.





Tools and Learning Formats

The course works with smaller groups, allowing intensive and in-depth discussions that go to the heart of your team's work. Trainers relate observations back to theory and evidence-informed knowledge. Curious rather than knowing, they encourage a mutual exchange of knowledge your team can draw on as they make changes to their practice – changes that lead to real improvements in your organisation and in children's lives and experiences.

Three-hour Masterclasses

These in-depth masterclasses explore specific case studies from your practice, giving your team a space to share their experience and wisdom. Your practitioners will learn and rehearse with an expert facilitator who will relate their observations to the latest developments in theory and research. Together, we use Socratic questioning, appreciative inquiry and focus on your practitioners' strengths to promote a useful exchange of knowledge with an immense impact on practice in your organisation.

Planning Sessions for Direct Work

These small group sessions go beyond the Action Learning Sets first explored in the Strengthening Practice Programme. Your practitioners will bring details of a current case, undertaking a practical, three-hour planning session to map the improvements they'll make with their new knowledge and skills.

Seriously Good Case Clinics

These classes examine successful cases from within your organisation to develop a systematic approach to figuring out what went so right. We help empower your practitioners to think purposefully and deliberately about how they apply emotional intelligence and practice wisdom to their future cases. This will help your team to consistently replicate their successes and share the lessons learned with a support network of peers. This is deep learning that spreads through your whole organisation to offer support everywhere.



Content and Structure of the Programme

The content of the programme depends entirely on the precise needs of your organisation. We'll work together with you to identify exactly where expanding on the

core skills developed through the Strengthening Practice programme will lead to big improvements in practice.

Evaluation

For every module your team completes, we gather and share with you feedback from participants and facilitators. This gives you a detailed and comprehensive view on what your team is learning, how it's meeting your goals and target areas for improvements, and how effectively the new knowledge and skills are making a difference in your organisation. Together, we use this feedback to identify anything that is blocking improvements and to refine the content of the course so that your team are supported where they need it most.

Here are just a few examples of the kind of modules we put together, facilitated by experts and national thought leaders.

Focusing on children and young people

Supporting families

Working in partnership

Assessment

Planning

Building relationships

Recording

Relationship-based practice

Evidence-based practice

Reflective Practice

Working effectively where neglect is an issue

Working effectively with domestic abuse

The Strengthening Care Programme

The Strengthening Care Programme will support excellence in residential and foster care settings, with a focus on the knowledge and skills needed to provide purposeful and effective care to children and young people.

This programme will unpack what is needed to create a home and become a parent that meets each individual child's needs, that repairs damage, restores relationships and prepares each child for a successful adulthood.

We know that caring for someone else's child brings with it a very significant responsibility and focus, and we should take it very seriously.



“Looking at care from the perspective of the child encourages us to always ask, ‘So what for the child?’ and to adjust our care appropriately”



STRENGTHENING CARE

Each child needs us to fight for them, to jealously prioritise their needs and to go all out to make sure they are given every opportunity

to live the life they would like.

Looking at care from the perspective of the child encourages us to always ask, 'So what for the child?' and to adjust our care appropriately. To be able to do that effectively we must have first understood the child's past experiences and also their lived experience today. The children that we care for will have had a range of experiences, many of them adverse, that have left each child with a unique perspective on their world, and also a unique way of negotiating with, and understanding, their environment and the people around them.

Content and structure of the programme

The programme consists of a seminar to introduce the programme, and 6 workshops built around Kim Golding's six Pyramid of Need and Assessment Matrix areas.

Over these six workshops we will explore the theory, knowledge and practice that helps us be the best parents and carers we can be. We will think about our individual, team and service wide responses to the child's needs; we will learn together what it is that the children we care for need from us.

Feeling physically and emotionally safe together

Developing relationships and how we model and support young people to explore and test new safe relationships

Comfort and Co-Regulation – how we support safe expression of a full range of emotions

Empathy and reflection, helping the child find sense and meaning in their past, present and future

Resilience and resources – building a strong network around the child

Exploring the impact of trauma and loss – understanding the impact of what happened for the child

At Strengthening Practice, we understand that good outcomes for children are born out of relationships that work, and that is what we model. We will form good quality authentic relationships with programme participants that create space and safety to think about practice and to try out new ideas and approaches.

Programme resources

The workshops are supported by our best-in-class workbooks, online self-directed learning, reflective follow up learning and small group coaching.



Strengthening Care Programme

Developing care that makes a difference.

The Early Help Programme

The Early Help Programme is designed to support anyone who works with children at risk, prior to the stage where social workers have become involved.

This role may vary from place to place, but nationally these workers form a vital part of children's journeys – making decisions on the very front line of care. They support the entire community of professionals who first encounter children, young people and families at risk.

This programme strengthens your team's knowledge of best practice and up-to-date research and builds capacity to apply this knowledge to their work. The training helps your staff feel more confident making sound and defensible decisions – navigating the situations they encounter with emotional wisdom and resilience to help drive better outcomes for the people you serve.



**“designed to
support anyone who works
with children at risk, prior
to the stage where social
workers have become
involved”**

Phil Rigotti - Trainer



Tools and Learning Formats

We'll work closely with you to build exactly the programme you need – working together to identify the areas where your workers will find support and guidance most valuable.

Each module of the programme is delivered through multiple learning methods to ensure your team's new knowledge results in tangible improvements in children's lives. This includes full-day foundation workshops, half-day masterclasses, community coaching clinics – plus really useful learning and reference materials.



Foundation Workshops

A full-day workshop that allows your team to reflect on up-to-date research and knowledge on best practice with an expert facilitator,

helping them to identify the tools and methods of intervention that have proven to be most helpful. This interactive day involves presentations, role plays, problem-solving activities and skills demonstrations – designed to allow the team to draw on each other's experience as a key resource and confidently apply their refreshed knowledge to drive improvements in their work.



Masterclasses

These intensive three-hour sessions give your team the opportunity for a round-table discussion as a group – to help absorb the new information

they've gathered and consider how it can inform their practice. These classes will also be supported by quality learning resources and reference materials, leading into to later work in community coaching clinics.



Community Coaching Clinics

Finally, in small groups of eight, your team will work with an accredited and experienced coach to enhance

their confidence as educators and coaches in their own right. They'll leave feeling more confident offering guidance and support to front-line professionals – having developed a conversational and curious questioning style that helps to empower the whole community of professionals you work with – to find positive solutions when faced with challenging cases.

Content and Structure of the Programme

The content of the programme depends entirely upon the needs of your organisation. The following are just a few examples of the kinds of workshops and masterclasses available, facilitated by expert trainers.

Evaluation

We consult with you throughout the programme, gathering feedback from participants and facilitators and sharing this with you. We support you to identify any obstacles to learning and work together to make sure the newly-acquired knowledge and skills are driving real improvements in the lives of children, young people and families.

Following the course, you'll have access to a comprehensive and detailed study of the impact on your organisation. It's an authoritative account covering positives and negatives of the training, detailing how practice has improved and highlighting any remaining obstacles or areas for further improvement.



“We support you to identify any obstacles to learning and work together to make sure the newly-acquired knowledge and skills are driving real improvements in the lives of children, young people and families”.

Engaging with adolescents to help make a difference to their lived lives.



We'll help bring your staff up to date with the latest information and thinking around working effectively with young people. This includes evidence from research on what works in communicating with adolescents, building their resilience, contextual safeguarding

and specific risk issues that apply in adolescence. The training helps your team to feel confident applying this knowledge to make a positive difference in adolescents' lives.

Working well with domestic abuse



This topic helps your workers to apply the latest evidence and knowledge to better deal with situations where domestic abuse is an issue. Your team will learn to define domestic abuse, exploring the power and control dynamics that underpin it. Participants will

strengthen their understanding of domestic abuse's impact on family relationships – better appreciating children's individual needs and development in the context of domestic abuse and the responsibility to challenge denial and minimisation of abuse. The course helps your staff to learn the most effective ways to speak to children and their families about abuse, and how to apply this knowledge to risk and safety planning to help achieve better outcomes for the people you serve.

Modelling emotional intelligence and resilience in relational practice



This masterclass gives your team the tools and techniques to boost their resilience while strengthening those they work with. Your staff will explore ways to maintain a positive outlook, control their workload, building emotional intelligence and understanding the signs and impact

of secondary trauma, seeking help where needed. We'll help strengthen your team's resilience, encouraging them to recognise when and how they need support. The course also explores how your staff can model resilience in their interactions with children, young people and their families – allowing the strength of your team to strengthen in turn the people you serve.

Working effectively where neglect is an issue



This masterclass helps your staff to understand the latest evidence and information on how to most effectively help young people and their families where neglect is an issue. Staff learn to define neglect in its many forms, exploring the impact of neglect on the child and

on adolescents. The class encourages your team to think about the causes of neglect and identify strategies for supporting parents to meet their children's needs. This knowledge helps participants feel more confident in identifying risk and safety issues related to neglect and to apply this to your organisation's work with children and young people.

Poor mental health and its impact on behaviours, parenting and families.

In this class your team will learn about the latest evidence-based knowledge around how best to approach situations where mental health is an issue. Your staff will learn how to define mental illness and understand its different types and causes. The course explores reasons why people don't seek help and the impact mental illness may have on parenting capacity. Your team will also learn how issues of mental health are experienced through a child's eyes, helping them to sensitively apply this knowledge to more effectively identify risk and safety issues in parental mental health.

Understanding contributors to, and early signs of, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

This workshop establishes a common language to ensure that your staff clearly understand what defines abuse, neglect and exploitation of children, young people and their families. It makes use of concepts including thresholds, risk and resilience matrices, and child development – so staff feel more confident identifying risks to children and young people.

Engaging, listening and responding helpfully to children and families – a whole family approach.



This workshop helps your staff to communicate more effectively with children and families during assessment and planning – vital in driving improvements to the work your organisation delivers. The coursework promotes partnership working and techniques that help families learn

from practitioners. Participants explore questioning techniques such as Motivational Interviewing, Signs of Safety and Solution-focused

Approaches, developing SMART plans and learning how the whole family network can help support effective change.

Professional judgement and decision making.

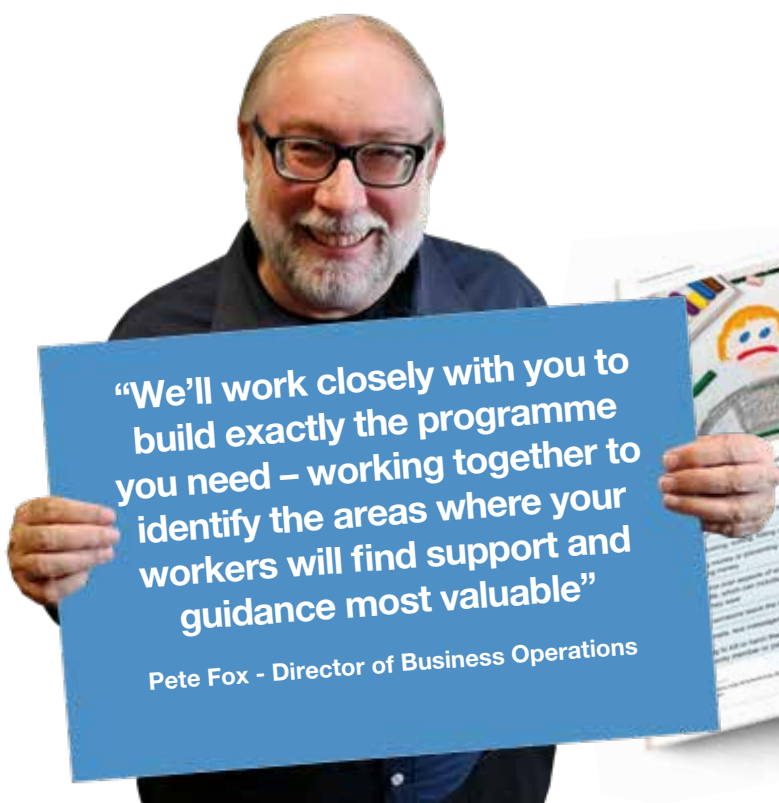


We'll help your team to strengthen their evidence-based decision making and make better decisions. This workshop examines how we use our professional curiosity and heuristics to gather and process information – considering many possibilities and triangulating a child's story to arrive at a decision 'least likely

to be wrong.' We'll help your staff to implement useful tools, including checklists and matrices, to help expand the scope of their thinking and the possibilities they consider when considering new cases.

Informed consent, information sharing, and recording.

This workshop helps your staff to understand the importance of safe and effective information sharing and evidence-based recording. Referring to legislation and best practice guidance around information sharing, your team will better understand the value base and the ethics of recording – appreciating the critical importance of good record keeping for your organisation, for them, and for the children you work with. Tools such as genograms, chronologies and the discrepancy matrix will help staff record and share their observations with confidence.



Reflective spaces, coaching and team well-being



REFLECTIVE SPACES
COACHING AND TEAM WELL-BEING

Here at Strengthening Practice, we believe that because we are outside of the pressures and daily busyness of large organisations, we are in an ideal position to coach and support people to make safe decisions, carry out helpful interventions or to think their way through 'stuck' cases and situations.

We can make space for practitioners, managers and leaders to talk through their fears and worries about working in difficult environments and to explore their own goals in a confidential setting with an experienced facilitator.



“Reflective Spaces are an important element of any staff well-being offer.”

Shane Brown - Team support

Facilitated Reflective Spaces for practitioners

The addition of a Reflective Space using a coaching approach can complement and enhance the effectiveness of your existing supervision relationships and staff support provision. A reflective space allows for individuals, or teams, to be supported to identify and work with their own solutions and ideas and allows us to step away from being the 'fixer' or 'teller.' Reflective Spaces are an important element of any staff well-being offer.

All of our staff are experienced in supporting individuals and teams using a coaching approach, alongside substantial experience as practitioners or managers in social care settings.

Individual 1-1 Reflective Space Coaching – Small Group Reflective Space Coaching

Our 1-1 or Small Group (up to 8 individuals) Reflective Space Coaching will provide the opportunity to access up to three, one to two hour coaching sessions. It is a safe and confidential space that can provide a valuable opportunity to think differently and explore things in new ways.

Examples of how our coaching offer may be used:

	<p>A confidential 1-1 session for an individual – to discuss working in uncertain times and explore individual responses and thoughts to particular circumstances.</p>
	<p>Facilitation of a discussion with key workers and managers about a child / young person with complex needs where everyone is feeling stuck.</p>
	<p>Group reflective supervision – a safe reflective space to think about a particular subject or current situation impacting on more than one person.</p>

Each session will use a reflective coaching model and allow time to explore the issue and to identify a goal, strategy, tool, approach or idea that can be taken away. Where appropriate we will support the session with materials or tools from our own comprehensive Strengthening Practice workbooks and materials, or other available resources.

Team Developmental Coaching

The impact of coaching is still mainly identified at the level of the individual's development, rather than on organisation-wide performance or organisational development. However, there is increasing interest in considering the wider organisational benefit and impact of developing a coaching approach.

Our bespoke Team Developmental Coaching offer will introduce individuals in teams to the usefulness of a coaching approach at the same time as supporting that whole team in developing their effectiveness, communication, and performance together.

Over a six-month period, meeting face-to-face monthly, our coaches will work with the team around two objectives:



Enhance the effectiveness of team performance.



Develop coaching skills as a medium for self-regulation.

Through Team Developmental Coaching your team will develop an awareness of team dynamics and effectiveness, and their own individual contribution to that. This Team Developmental Coaching offer is an ideal opportunity for whole teams to learn about each other's functioning and how that relates to team effectiveness. The team will experience a coaching approach and be supported to learn the skills and approaches for themselves.



We will design the programme specifically to meet the needs of each team, paying attention to any developmental needs identified. For example: team dynamics, communication, workload pressures, job roles. For this reason, the Team Developmental Coaching offer is bespoke and would require a further commissioning discussion with the identified team.

Reflective spaces for managers and leaders

Aims of the programme

These are relational, reflective sessions that build vision and identity, enable teamwork and a strategic mindset. The overarching aim is to enable leaders to thrive professionally and personally so that they can be better leaders and deliver positive outcomes for the children and young people they serve.

The learning aims draw on:

- Evidence of what supports good leadership
Developing effective leadership
(www.researchinpractice.org.uk)
- Key areas from Ofsted – inspections and their research and analysis paper, Joining the Dots - Effective leadership of children's services, including:

Passionate about outcomes for children and young people
Involvement of children and young people
Vision for improvement with values and strategy
Transformational approach
Self-care and attention to well-being
Working with complexity
Clear accountability
Attention to culture
Attention to relationships
Communication and collaboration
Practice oversight and appropriate practice challenge
Risk management
Critical reflection
Self-challenge and culture of learning.

- Themes arising from commissioning discussions with the Director, such as:

Building the identify of new service managers
Developing relationships within the cohorts and across the whole leadership team
Creating a shared vision and mission
Supporting theme working as well as specialist working
Enabling sustainable work across the team
Leading by example across the organisation
Managing the relationships and expectations of external stakeholders.

Programme Components

This six-day programme comprises three reflective and one review sessions, which broadly cover the areas of:

- Internal within the leadership group
- Internal within the organisation
- External beyond the organisation



1. Thrive together (2 x 1 day sessions)

- Build relationships within the leadership group
- Create a shared identity and story
- Build investment in a shared vision and mission for children and young people.



2. Build the culture together (2 x 1/2 day sessions + 4 x 1.5 hour group coaching sessions)

- Embed shared values in how leaders work
- Develop a transformational leadership culture
- Harness the potential of the organisation's people.



3. Keep going together (1 x 1 day session)

- Enable strategies for self and organisational resilience
- Enable collaboration for improvement
- Embed critical reflection and learning.

● Review and embed (1 x 1 day session)

The programme is closed out with a final day of follow-up, including setting next actions to embed the learning outcomes.

Experts by experience

Since its inception, Strengthening Practice has been interested in bringing a diversity of voices into social care CPD training, including those of people who used social care services. Our work with people like Annie from Surviving Safeguarding and Kendra from Out of the Shadows brings challenge, reflection and change into our approach.

Having Annie on our staff team means that all our work is informed from the perspective of someone who has, in her own words, 'survived safeguarding'.

Having lived through adversity and done more than just survived but found a new way to accept and define themselves, both Kendra and Annie bring wisdom and compassion and a fierce desire to challenge complacency to their work.

Neither have stayed frozen in their past experiences but have worked to increase their knowledge through study, research and teaching others. They are experts in their fields, both by the perspective they bring from their own past and present lives alongside the knowledge and wisdom they have gained in the roles they have played in supporting, educating and challenging others since.

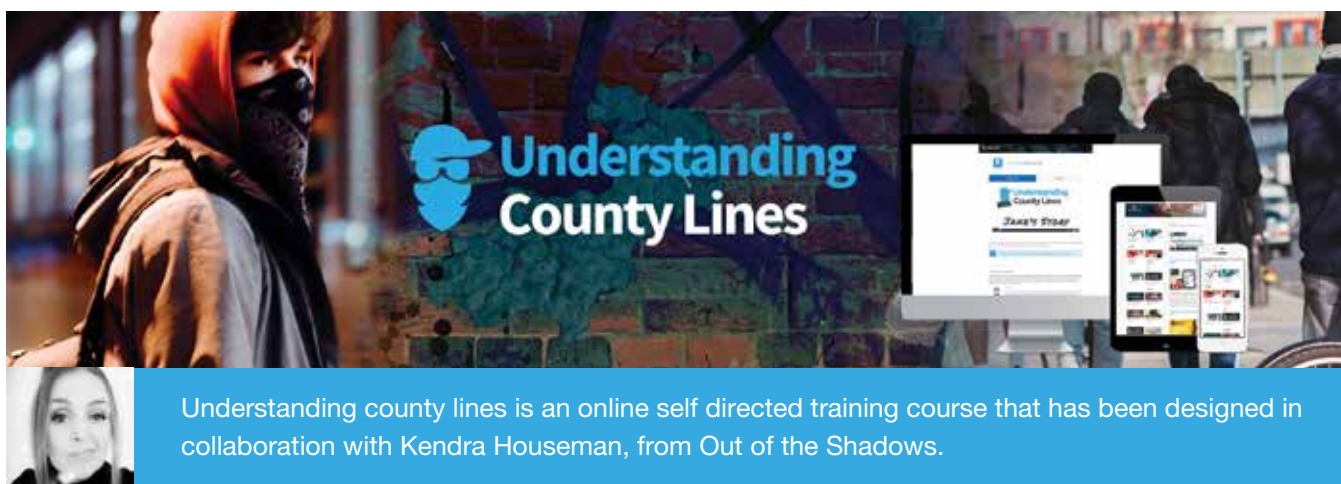
We are privileged to work alongside them as they advocate for change. We look forward to forming many more partnerships with people who work to remind us of the challenges and triumphs that affect people and underpin our work in social care.

Annie has created a fabulous suite of work for us to help us understand the journey of children and their families through Children's Services. Her online trainer-led workshops are always in high demand.

Kendra has developed the first of her offerings on working with children and young people who are involved in County Lines. This resource is available both as an interactive, self-directed learning experience and a trainer-led course.



"Both Annie and Kendra bring the knowledge and wisdom they have gained in the roles they have played in supporting, educating and challenging others"



Our driver in working together has been to create a course that bridges the gap between what we know and what we can do when we encounter and work with children and young people who have been exposed to or impacted by county lines. It can also be used by professionals to help educate children and young people about what county lines are and how to avoid exploitation.

With County Lines continuing to be a safeguarding priority, professionals will need accurate, focused and helpful information delivered to them in a timely way.

Time pressures are a real barrier to good quality CPD and our programme seeks to use the latest technology to ensure that professionals get a great online learning experience in the time they have.

The 12-unit programme is available to them for the whole year. They can dip in and out as they please and build up an online portfolio of resources to support their work.

What does the programme cover?

Over the 10 units you will work with Kendra to learn about the following topics:

What county lines is – according to the police, the gangs, the children and young people;

How to understand the language and the structure of gangs;

The impact that County Lines has on the lives of children and young people;

How to respond to children and young people involved with, or affected by county lines;

How to develop a preventative approach to educate children and young people about county lines.

How does it work?

You can sign up individually or as part of an organisation.



Individuals – sign up and receive:

10 x 30-minute lessons with tools, animations and videos and downloadable resources.

Gain CPD points; and

Complete your online test to gain evidence of the knowledge you have acquired.

Access to the course for 12 months from the time you sign up.

Free resources and tools from the SP collection



Organisations - sign up and receive:

10 x 30-minute lessons with tools, animations and videos and downloadable resources.

Gain CPD points; and

Complete your online test to gain evidence of the knowledge you have acquired.

Access to the course for 12 months from the time you sign up.

Free resources and tools from the SP collection


Buy the seats and know you can use them ALL throughout the year – supports whole team learning and takes account of staffing turnover.

Take an option for trainer-led delivery (face-to-face in your organisation or virtual).



Expert by Experience Programme

With Annie from Surviving Safeguarding



Annie Bertram has developed our Expert by Experience Programme to support anyone working with children, young people and their families in our social care system.

The “Expert by Experience” programme is designed to help practitioners reconnect with the families they work with and reignite their passion for relationship-based, restorative social care. Delivered by Annie, a well-known and well-respected ‘voice’ in our sector, this programme will help your workforce to stop, take a breath, reflect and learn new ways to better assess, engage and support the families who need our services.

Our common belief at Strengthening Practice is that restorative and respectful partnership working with families is the bedrock of any relationship-based social work practice. However, we also understand and appreciate how easy it is to become process-driven in a system which places a high emphasis on outcomes. How do you hold that tension, as a practitioner? How do you ensure your service works ‘with’ families?



“Annie developed our Expert by Experience Programme to support anyone working with children, young people and their families in our social care system.”

Enter ‘Annie’, our resident Expert by Experience, founder of Surviving Safeguarding, former Parent and Relatives Representative on the Family Justice Council, qualified family advocate, consultant and social care trainer.

Each workshop session will be delivered online via Microsoft Teams and will be supported by a range of materials.

Workshop 1:

Surviving Safeguarding: A parent’s perspective on the child protection process

Overview

This flagship Workshop takes the attendee through ‘Annie’s Story’ as a live Case Study with a range of activities to embed the learning.

This workshop covers:

Building restorative relationships and the importance of human kindness.

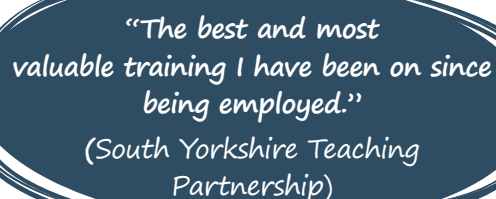
Recognising the impact of early trauma.

Seeing the family alongside the process and holding space for the “human” in the decision making.

Considering intervention or support and what informs our decision-making.

Exploring compliance and disguised compliance.

This Workshop is suitable for all social care practitioners, but may be of particular interest to social workers on their ASYE year, and service managers looking to embed a more family-focused approach.



“The best and most valuable training I have been on since being employed.”
(South Yorkshire Teaching Partnership)

Workshop 2:

Empowering families

This Workshop aims to develop practitioner's skills in working in partnership with families involved with children's social care, helping to empower them to advocate for themselves and ensure their voices are heard.

This workshop covers:

- | |
|--|
| Working in partnership with families: research, evidence and experience. |
| 'Done to' rather than 'worked with': the power of restorative practice. |
| Understanding shame as a barrier to participation. |
| The importance of language. |
| First steps in involving families in service design and delivery. |

This Workshop is suitable for all social care practitioners, but may be of particular interest to social workers on their ASYE year, and service managers starting to think about the role of parent representation, as recommended in the recent Care Review (2022).

Workshop 3:


Improving Assessment: A parent's perspective

This Workshop aims to develop practitioner's skills in undertaking assessments and improving the quality of the information gathered during assessment by building authentic humane relationships.

This workshop covers:

- | |
|--|
| Considering the process of assessment, SMART & POWER planning. |
| Models of assessment – who does it benefit? |
| Engaging with families. |
| Barriers to participation (and how to overcome them). |
| Decision-making and information sharing. |

This Workshop is suitable for all social care practitioners, but may be of particular interest to assessment teams, social workers on their ASYE year, and student social workers.



"Every social worker, team manager, service unit manager, local authority and judge needs to hear this presentation."

(South Yorkshire Teaching Partnership)

Workshop 4:

Exploring Thresholds

This Workshop aims to develop practitioners necessary skills and requirements to make safe and appropriate decisions. This Workshop includes online exercises to embed learning and downloadable tools and resources to support practitioners.

This workshop covers:

- | |
|---|
| What are Thresholds and why do they matter? |
| How do we identify and respond to risk, particularly in relation to longstanding concerns of chronic neglect and wider exploitation? |
| Improving the quality and screening of referrals so that history is well understood, and appropriate information is sought to inform decision making. |
| Common errors in reasoning, and common shortcuts in decision making. |
| Better working with partner agencies to share threshold decisions for social work support. |

This Workshop is suitable for all social care practitioners, but may be of particular interest to first-contact assessment teams, practitioners working in a MASH team, and social workers on their ASYE year.



How to commission a Strengthening Practice Workforce Development Programme for your organisation

No matter the challenges you're facing, we'll support you through every step of the commissioning process, **and together we'll explore and identify what support your team needs.**

Our work with you begins with one or more conversations with relevant members of your team (e.g. learning & development, service manager/s) to understand your requirements. For example: would you like face to face or virtual workshops (or a combination of both); how many participants do you wish to participate in the programme; are there any particular topic areas you wish us to focus or expand upon or even remove from the programme? We try to be as flexible as we can when developing a proposal, so that you receive a programme that best fits your requirements and budget.

We also have a Readiness to Learn toolkit, which a number of organisations have found helpful for identifying the conditions within the organisation and workforce that might contribute to - or hinder - successful training, e.g. existing knowledge in the workforce (and any gaps), availability of facilities and technology, communication with staff and staff culture, time allocated for training and funding available. We'll work closely with you, providing helpful advice and guidance so you can ready your organisation and get the most out of training.

How much does it cost?

This entirely depends on your specific requirements, and we will provide a quote once we have discussed your needs. As an example, however, the full Strengthening Care programme was recently delivered over a period of 18 months to 350 foster carers, residential staff, and family workers at approx £440

per person, for 6.5 training days per participant, with a hybrid mix of in-person and virtual learning. Note that per person costs reduce as participant numbers increase.

Who can I talk to for more information?

We would be delighted to have a conversation with you about your particular needs.



Please feel free to call our head office on **01900 822 458** to arrange a discussion with our training team.



You can also email us at:
training@strengtheningpractice.co.uk



We also provide a wide range of other learning programmes for children's and adult social care.

Please take a look at our website for more information, or you can request this brochure in hard-copy or digital format.

training@strengtheningpractice.co.uk
www.strengtheningpractice.co.uk



We are an accredited training and CPD provider with the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) and are members of the UK CPD Certification Service.





STRENGTHENING PRACTICE®
DEVELOPING SKILLED AND VIBRANT PROFESSIONALS

Strengthening Practice Online Learning

Learning that is designed to fit in
with your busy work and home lives...



"Our courses are designed to fit around you and can be easily
accessed using your PC, laptop, tablet, or phone"

Rooted in the training needs of the social care workforce, and authored by industry experts, our online learning is designed to be educational, thought-provoking, and reflective. Our courses will help you to think deeply about how the topics link into your everyday cases and the people you work with. The interactive and supportive sessions create a space to stop and think, refreshing and acquiring skills specific to practice.

We are mindful of the challenges we have recently faced with the global pandemic, COVID-19, and we understand that training and development needs to fit in with busy lives.

All of our courses are CPD accredited, so you can be sure that you are investing wisely in yourself and your development.

Visit www.strengtheningpractice.co.uk



Understanding County Lines

This series of three self-directed workshops, from level one - three, will explore and unpack some key areas around county lines and the exploitation and abuse that takes place within.



Engaging with Families

This course will take you from the basics of engaging more effectively with families in a humane and respectful way right through to involving families in service design and delivery.

Courses coming soon...

Exploring Homelessness

Understanding Adolescent Neglect

Supervision for Supervisees

Exploring Thresholds

Supervision for Supervisors



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