Relational and Restorative Practice

One Minute Guide

**In Newcastle we believe that families are our most important resource. Children live in families, families create communities and communities create cities, so by investing in strong and stable families we can create the conditions for a more successful city.**

Since 2020, in Newcastle we have been developing **a Relational and Restorative Practice** approach. This is underpinned by investment of £3.1m from the Department for Education’s ‘Strengthening Families, Protecting Communities’ Programme which sees us partnered with Leeds City Council to introduce and embed the approach across our systems, via a programme of funding and support named ‘Family Valued’.

What is “Relational and Restorative Practice”?

Relational and restorative practice places emphasis on building meaningful and respectful relationships first, as opposed to focusing solely on process or policy. It focusses on practitioners **working ‘with’ children and families, instead of doing ‘to’ them or ‘for’ them.** This allows us to provide high levels of support and challenge so that they are empowered to be involved in decisions that affect them, and more likely to make positive sustained changes in their lives.

Relational and restorative practice encourages us to focus on relationships all the time to prevent harm occurring, rather than just repair them after harm has occurred (as in restorative justice). It is not a model or a tool, it is a way of thinking and working, that is strengths based and values driven.

Why now?

In 2019 in Newcastle, there had already been some good progress made in how Children’s Social Care worked with families and partners such as schools to keep children safe and well. To build on this, it was recognised that more could be done to support vulnerable children in the city. This builds on existing strong relational ways of working in the city and we know that many practitioners across the city already work very hard to build strong relationships with children and families, so they trust them and can get to know each other well.

For further information contact Kate.williams@newcastle.gov.uk

How is this working in Newcastle?

* 500+ Newcastle practitioners have attended **restorative practice training**
* We are increasing opportunities for children’s **Voice and Influence** to influence plans and decisions that affect them and building on the political mandate from **No Child Left Behind**.
* **Children & Families Newcastle** launched August 2021;this is a collaborative approach to earlier intervention
* **Family Group Conferencing Service** launched in August 2021
* Emerging work with some Newcastle schools to explore how restorative leadership and practice can be successfully embedded within school settings, to positively impact on pupils, parents, staff and wider communities. Learn more about RP in schools here [*A conversation about restorative practice*](https://www.independentthinking.co.uk/resources/posts/2020/june/a-conversation-about-restorative-practice/)
* We continue to work closely with Leeds City Council to share good practice and review how processes can be developed using this approach.

What does this mean for my role and organisation?

**Relational and Restorative practice is not about replacing current effective ways of working, rather it is an umbrella term about how we put those models or tools into practice.**

Across all agencies and sectors working with children and families, relational and restorative practice allows us the tools and strategies to strengthen relationships and increase our understanding of everyone we work with. From the language that we use, to how effectively we listento understand, RP helps us to purposefully create a culture and practice that is respectful, value-based and outcome focussed.

Training and development opportunities

Training and development opportunities will be accessible via the NSCP website and will include:

* Regular ‘Restorative Practice Awareness’ training sessions available for any practitioner working with children and families in Newcastle to attend
* Workshops and masterclasses
* Resources and practice tools