The initial funding for Reducing Parental Conflict from DWP was received in West Sussex in 2019 and was restricted to ***‘RPC Awareness & Skills*** *(tools to respond to RPC)* ***training***’ to support Local Authority and Multi Agency staff and services to focus on introducing and addressing a Reducing Parental Conflict agenda across the area. The funding also allowed for ***Train the Trainers Training***, so that awareness and skills could continue to be developed longer term through a Train the trainer / Champion group. Funding through bid 1 only allowed spend on RPC training through one RPC training provider – Knowledge Pool, and training was offered as mixed modules focusing on awareness, skills, tools, and training for supervisors and managers.

Since 2019 - **538** staff accessed the funded ***RPC Awareness and Skills Training***. The Training was provided by one approved DWP ‘Knowledge Pool’ trainer. In West Sussex the focus on offering face to face level 2 and 3 and during COVID-19 this was delivered via a webinar which proved to be a very well received option. 1 Train the trainers training was delivered and attended by multiagency partners. All courses were advertised on our Learning and Development Gateway and open for partner organization to access. The West Sussex Safeguarding Partnership has supported the promotion of the courses to the wider partnership.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Event Title** | **Event Details** |
| **Delivered** | **Total Bookings** | **WSCC Staff** | **Non-WSCC Staff** |
| Module 1: Raising Awareness | 10 | 175 | 138 | 37 |
| Webinar delivered during COVID | 7 | 112 | 77 | 35 |
| Module 2: Theory | 12 | 141 | 119 | 22 |
| Module 3: Skills Practice | 9 | 110 | 99 | 11 |
| Module 4: Supervisors | 1 | 15 | 14 | 1 |
| Training the Trainer  | 2 | 23 | 22 | 1 |

Following the end of the first year of funding, the plan to ensure the sustainability of the RPC training was to develop our own internal offer delivered in house. The course materials were reviewed and amended to take out the duplication across the Knowledgepool modules and to tailor the course to fit with Early Help and Children’s Social Care workforce. A train the trainer course was delivered in house. Then due to COVID we had to refocus and move much of our offer online. As there was a slight underspend in funding for training from the previous year we were able to use this to rollout a webbased offer through Knowledgepool and this was well received. The focus has been on raising awareness among staff and building knowledge about the tools and e-resources available to practitioners. An annual skills audit shows that staff within Early Help feel confident to support families where there is interparental conflict.

**Delivery of Train the Trainers Training**

A train the trainer session was delivered to organisations within West Sussex by Knowledgepool, who was the designed training provider commissioned by DWP. There were 12 people at this event including staff from West Sussex County Council, Midwifery, and Change Grow Live. Following this training RPC was embedded into a pilot midwifery project within Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust as part of newly qualified midwifery training and it was embedded as part of the Baby Matters parenting Rawlinson. This has not been delivered face to face since March 2020 due to COVID restrictions. Within West Sussex County Council the trainers have reviewed and developed content for in house delivery and delivered a further Train the Trainer for in house staff to roll out within Early Years and Children’s Services. However due to COVID this was not fully explored. With impending transformation of children’s services and capacity to deliver in house training the plan going forward is to use the workforce grant to purchase external providers to deliver the training offer, further supported by Train the Trainer for district and borough councils and other local organisations who have capacity to roll out the training internally.

**Training Evaluation & follow up Evaluation:**

The focus within West Sussex has been to raise awareness among staff of the complexities and impacts that interparental conflict has on children and families and provide them with tools to carry out direct work with parents/carers rather than signpost on to services.

The web based offer has been very well received and feedback suggests that this has increased accessibility to the material and enabled staff to have broader understanding about the evidence and tools available. Further face to face sessions will enable a richer, broader discussion and practice of the tools to use with families to further build confidence.

Areas we need to improve on

* Broaden our reach into partner organisations so that they can access the training easily. The training was mostly taken up by Early Help staff and so this will be a target in the future.
* Evaluation and feedback need to be built into practice so that we can report on the impact the training has had on direct work with families.
* RPC needs to be built in at a strategic level and embedded into practice across the partnership. With key focus on what outcomes are desired for children.
* Deliver specific sessions for the police and midwifery, health visiting who have direct work with children and whose organization are pan Sussex so ensuring messaging is consistent across the partnership.
* Develop physical tools and resources to support the training to aid practitioner when working directly with families.

**Themes from the training include;**

Evaluations following the initial awareness and skills sessions include;

* **90% of participants were able to apply what you have learnt from this training directly into their practice**
* The stages of a relationship tool was a brilliant resource to use with families to reflect on where they are and where they would like to be
* Some of the ways they would do this included;
* Increase in consideration to the parents relationship with each other, which will impact on a child, rather than just concentrating on the relationship between parents and children.
* speaking to parents about the importance of resolution and impact on children
* The direct work that EH does with families will usually involve an element of conflict between parents so having an evidence base and skills to support families is highly useful to support successful behaviour changes
* To work effectively to help resolve conflict in order to meet the children’s needs
* will be more aware of the conversations between parents and the language used
* model of behaviour was good.
* have a better understanding of parental conflict to be more mindful when working with families directly.

“As a Family Support Assistant in Early Help I am attuned to Parental Conflict in families and am aware of the Impact on children and young people. We understand the importance of obtaining the views of all family members to enable us to work together effectively in order to enable change. It is positive that the course has instilled further the importance of getting a partner's views in these situations. I feel that Module 1 and 2 could be put together as one course as there was repetition.”

Impact Evaluations 12 weeks post course;

Participants who attended the awareness and skills sessions were followed up 12 weeks post courses and asked what they had been able to change or implement as a result of the training. The themes of the results are highlighted below.

* Able to use the training in how to review the relationship between parents and reflect on how to word things differently for better outcomes for children.
* Able to use some of the strategies with children living with parental conflicts and been able to support parents to understand how this is impacting on their children at home and school.
* Gained more background behind issues affecting parents and relationships
* Developed healthy relationship work with families and how to talk through conflict and the impact on children.
* Better able to hold conversations with families about strategies to minimise conflicts within the family home and the impact this can be having on the children in the home.
* Have used the resources available to plan sessions with parents

**Growing Resilient Families Learning Event – follow up evaluation**

The Practice Improvement Team within the Early Help Service (WSCC) ran a one-day event called *Growing Resilient Families: Relationships Matter* on 25th February 2020. The event was held at the Charmandean Centre in Worthing and had capacity for approx. 100 professionals to attend. The purpose of the learning event was to raise awareness among the local workforce of the effect of alcohol use during pregnancy, as well as the impact parental alcohol use and conflict can have on children.

The aims of the learning event were identified using a logic model. These were to understand whether the event has improved staff awareness and knowledge of:

1. The risks of alcohol use during pregnancy

2. The impact alcohol can have on families

3. The associations between parent/carer alcohol use and conflict and its impact on children

4. The pathway to refer all women (and partners) who are drinking alcohol during pregnancy to CGL

**Outcomes from the learning event**

* Nearly 90% of professionals felt they knew some or a lot about pathways for referrals after the event, compared to 34% prior to the event.
* Approximately 94% of professionals reported “some” or “a lot” of understanding about the impact of parental conflict on children, compared to 85% before the event.
* Similarly, 96% of professionals reported understanding “some” or “a lot” regarding the impact of alcohol use on children, compared to 82% before the event
* Understanding of the impact of alcohol use in pregnancy also increased from 76% before the event to 98% after the event

6 month Follow up survey: The primary aim of the follow up survey was to understand whether professionals had been able to apply any skills/knowledge learnt at the event in their work with families. This compliments the initial feedback that professionals provided on the day of the event.

The key findings from the follow-up survey were:

* 20 professionals representing several different organisations responded to the survey (response rate of 22.5%).
* Many respondents indicated that they work with families affected by parental conflict and alcohol use regularly (at least on a monthly basis).
* In both surveys, most respondents felt more informed about parental conflict and alcohol use and the effect these can have on children following the event.
* Most respondents also felt more confident in their ability to discuss these topics with families.
* Some respondents had begun to use knowledge/skills gained to support families directly, and had shared learning and resources with colleagues.
* However, the restrictions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic have made it difficult for professionals to apply knowledge/skills gained at the event in their day-to-day practice. This was largely due to no, or limited face-to-face contact with families.
* In both surveys, respondents identified further areas for training such as reinforcing their learning with similar events, and tailored training to suit their particular area of work.

[**Evaluation of the Learning Event**](http://teamspace.westsussex.gov.uk/teams/TT/QD/PI/Strategic%20and%20PI%20Team%20Plans/Evaluation%20Report%20-%20Growing%20Resilient%20Families%20Event%20v2.8.pdf)

[**Follow up survey evaluation**](http://teamspace.westsussex.gov.uk/teams/TT/QD/PI/Strategic%20and%20PI%20Team%20Plans/Reducing%20Parental%20Conflict/Growing%20Resilient%20Families%20Learning%20Event%20February%202020/Evaluation/Evaluation%20Report%20-%20GF%20Event%20Follow-up%20v2.pdf)

**Summary of RPC position in West Sussex**

* Relatively small numbers of multi-agency staff have been trained in RPC and these staff are mostly in Children’s and Early help Services, key agencies like housing, health and police have not accessed training, and some were maybe unaware of the previous training offers.
* Staff generally recognise the need to focus on RPC, although they are not always skilled or confident enough to do so.
* Those trained in RPC are not utilising the full tools provided as part of the original training- we are unsure if this is limiting the reach and impact on RPC of the 200 people already trained. Specific RPC Support to parents post training from these delegates has probably taken a scatter gun approach dependent upon who is trained, what scope they have to deliver RPC support to parents in relationship distress, and how there team/ agency has chosen to use their new skills.
* Data is still lacking across the board on RPC and associated data categories.

Going forward we hope to continue the learning events in partnership with Change Grow Live and reducing alcohol dependency.

**Next Steps:**

With further transformation to the Early Help Service it has been agreed that the Reducing Parental Conflict Rawlinson will sit and be managed through the West Sussex Safeguarding Partnership and be monitored through the learning and development group. This is a multiagency group that is in a good position to be able to bring partner agencies together and make real impacts into the work with children and families across West Sussex and also make links Pan-Sussex. The partnership includes representation from WSCC, Health, Education, Police, District and Borough Councils, and local Voluntary organisations.