

Rekindling Relationship Based Social Work Practice

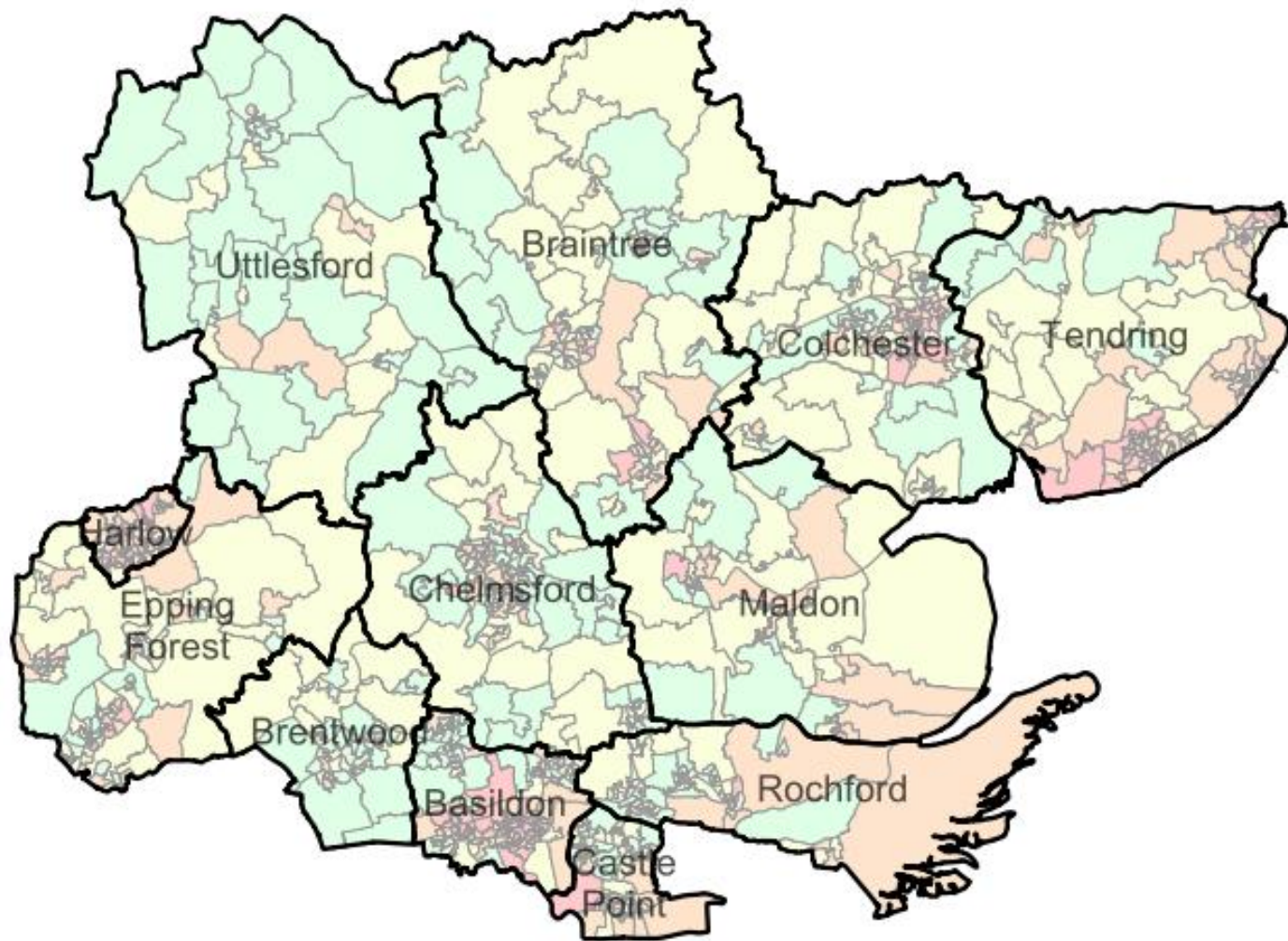
: Helen Lincoln
Executive Director for People Operations
Essex County Council

Some Essex Context

	Year end 2011	Year end 2014
Contacts	55,240	51,930
Referrals	17,610	12,739
Children in Need	9,248	6,412
Child Protection Plans	903	421
Children in Care	1,608	1,140
Children Adopted	45	110

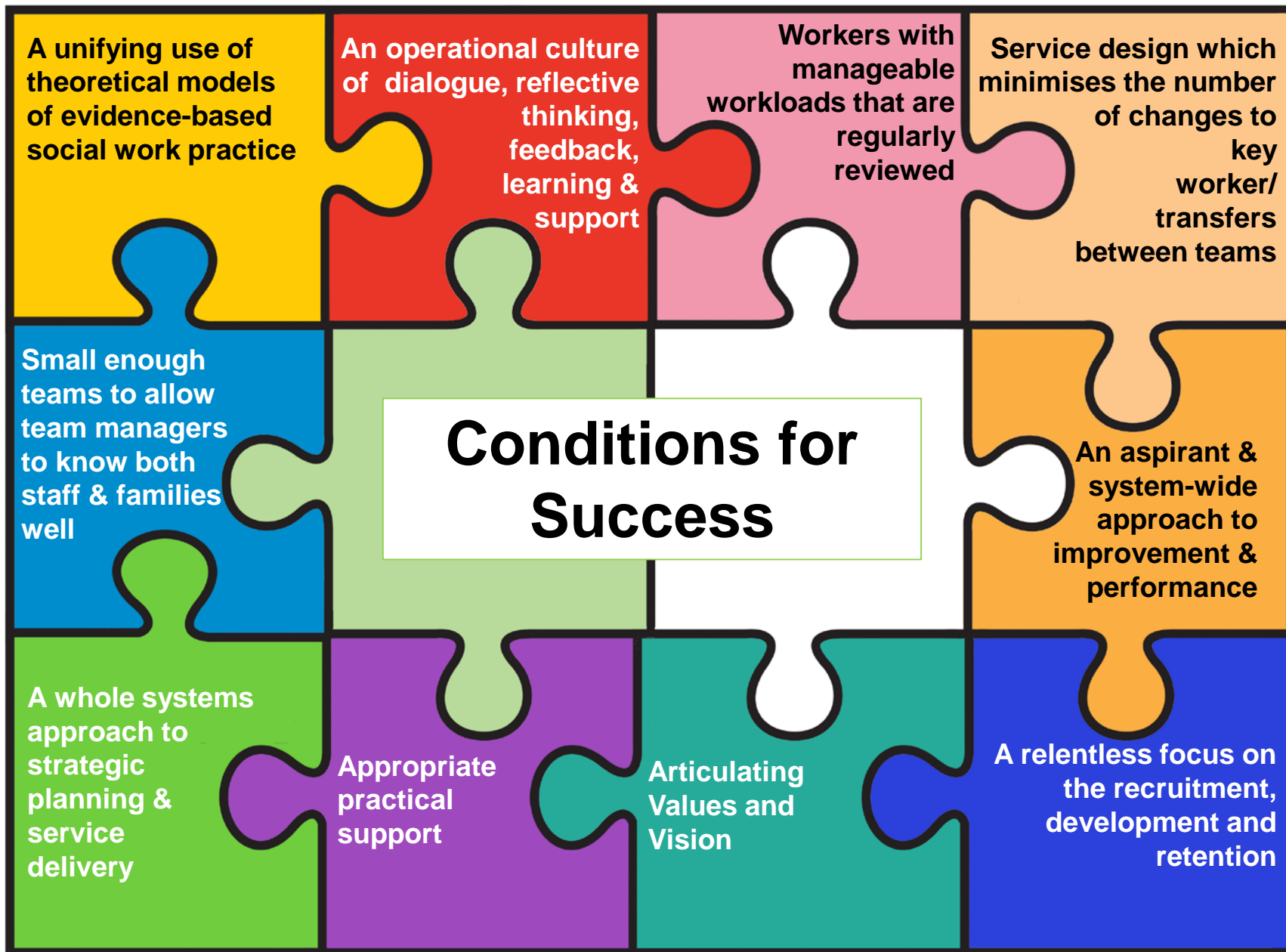
2014 – Ofsted rated ‘Good’

Mapping Deprivation in Essex

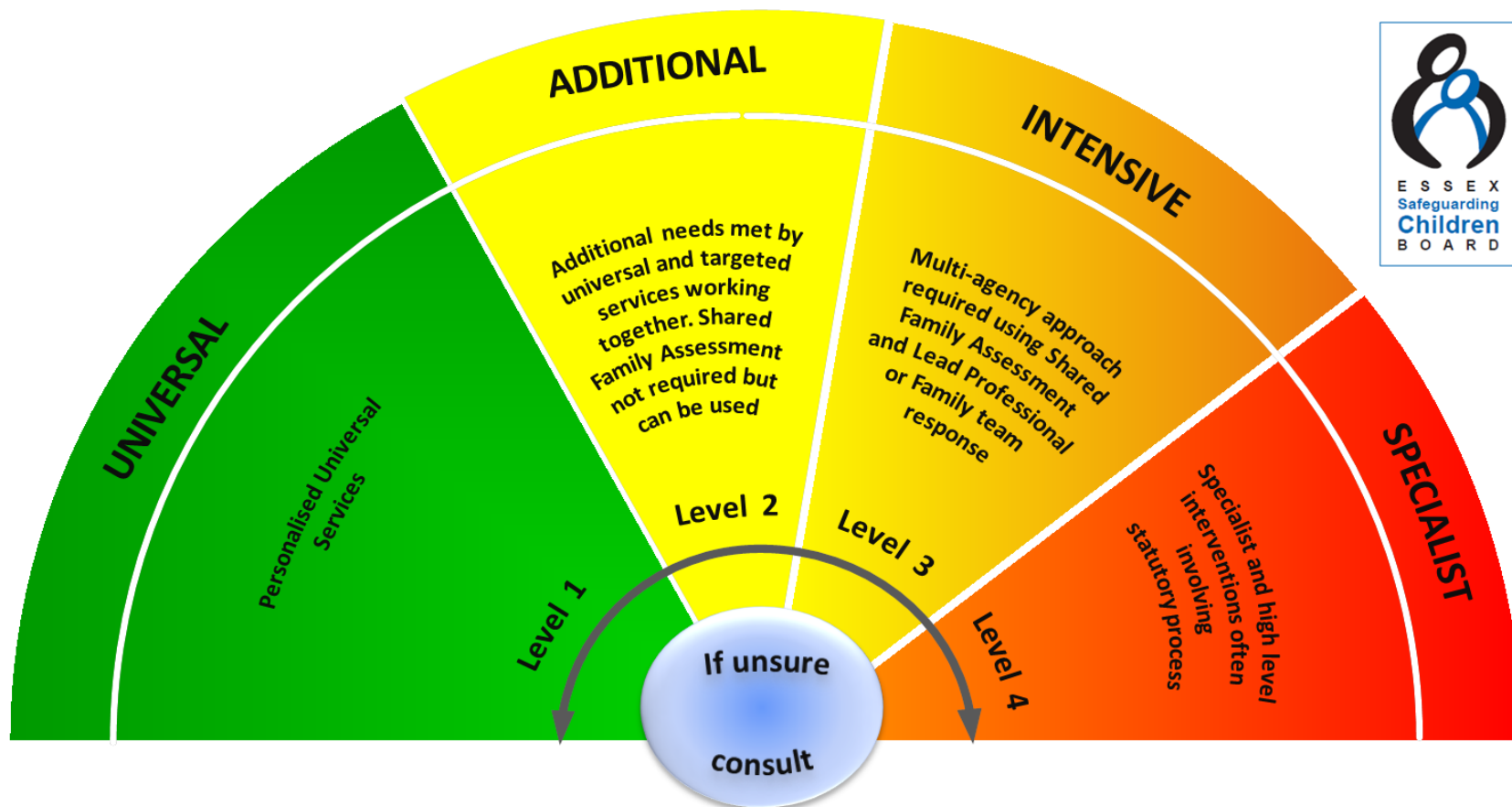


Least Deprived
Green

Most Deprived
Red



Wellbeing Effective Support Windscreen



SERIOUS
ABOUT
SOCIAL WORK

Despite everything that happens around it “social work will always begin and end with a human encounter between two or more people and this encounter, or relationship as it develops, is the medium through which the social work task is carried out”

Danielle Turney, University of Bristol

‘Relationship Based Social Work: getting to the heart of practice’

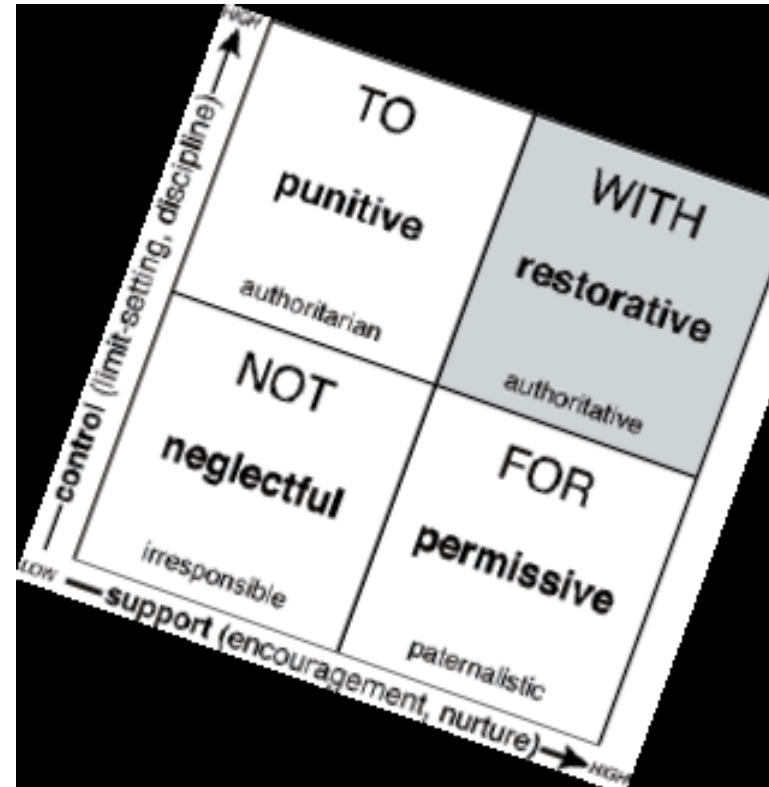
Relationship Based Practice

- Beginning; middle; end
- Working with families amidst crisis and uncertainty, tolerating uncertainty
- Seize the energy of crisis as a powerful change force
- It has a coherent theoretical grounding, not ignoring intuition but not dictated by it
- Relies on understanding family narratives, understanding how past experience affects current attitude and behaviour and how you work to change both
- Facilitates an environment for workers to be skilled and confident in their ability to confront, challenge and resolve
- Powerful approach for workers and they need the right support to anchor it

Modern relationship based practice approach curriculum

Training / tools

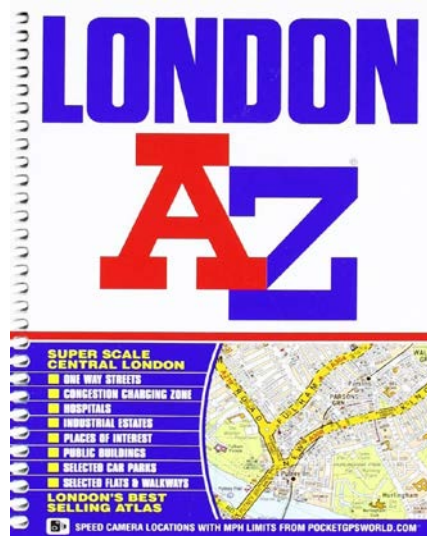
Strength based approaches
Signs of safety
Solution focused
CBT
Brief intervention
Systemic approaches
Motivational interviewing
Fostering changes
Systemic supervision



Applying these
intelligently

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BEWARE OF THE TOOL



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QUESTION ONE

Talk to the people sitting near you:

Are you clear about the social work methodology you promote?

Does the organisation you operate within have a clear social work methodology ?

VOTING

From your discussion what did you conclude?

Should organisations have an identifiable methodology to its social work practice?

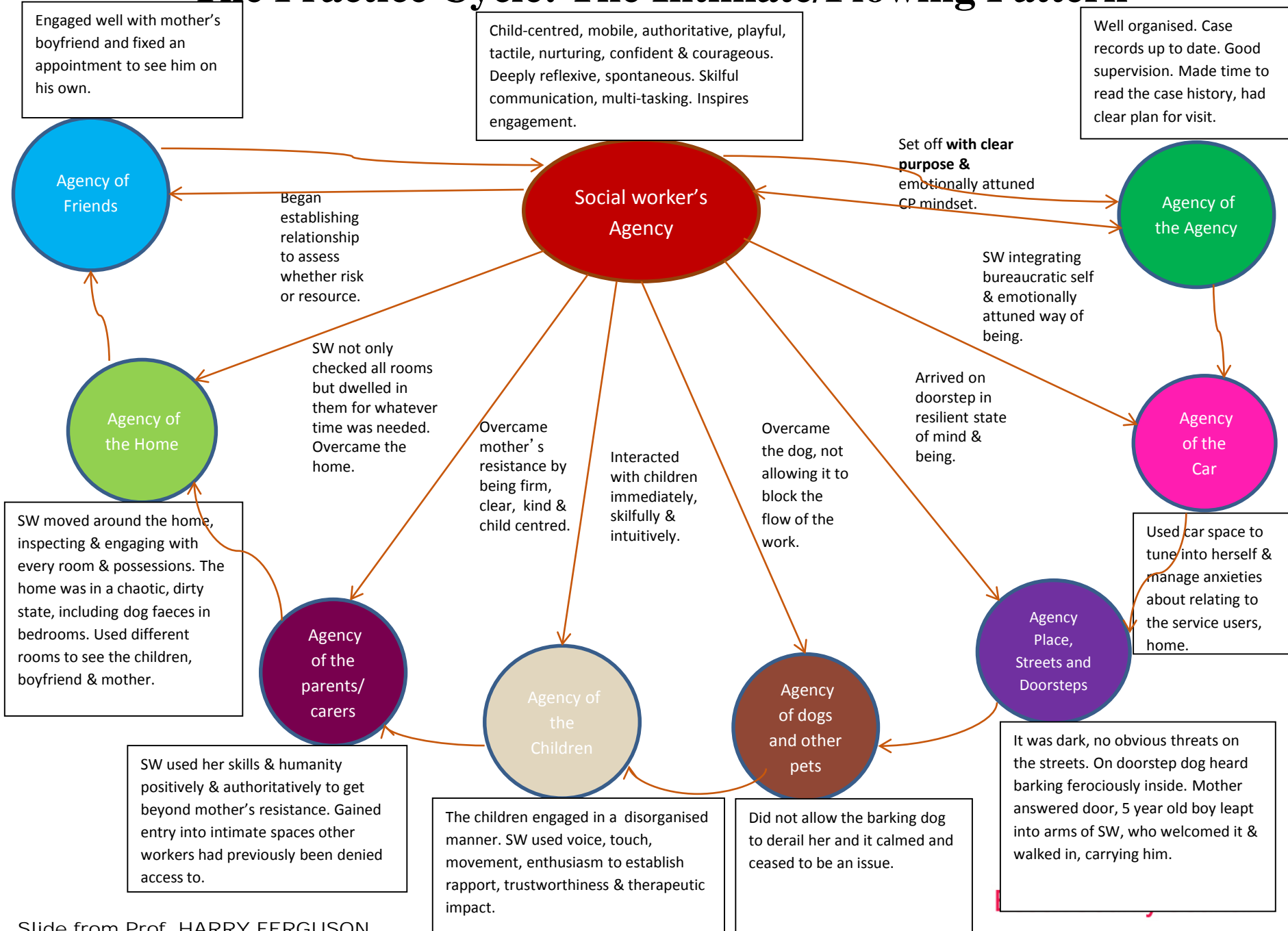
YES

NO

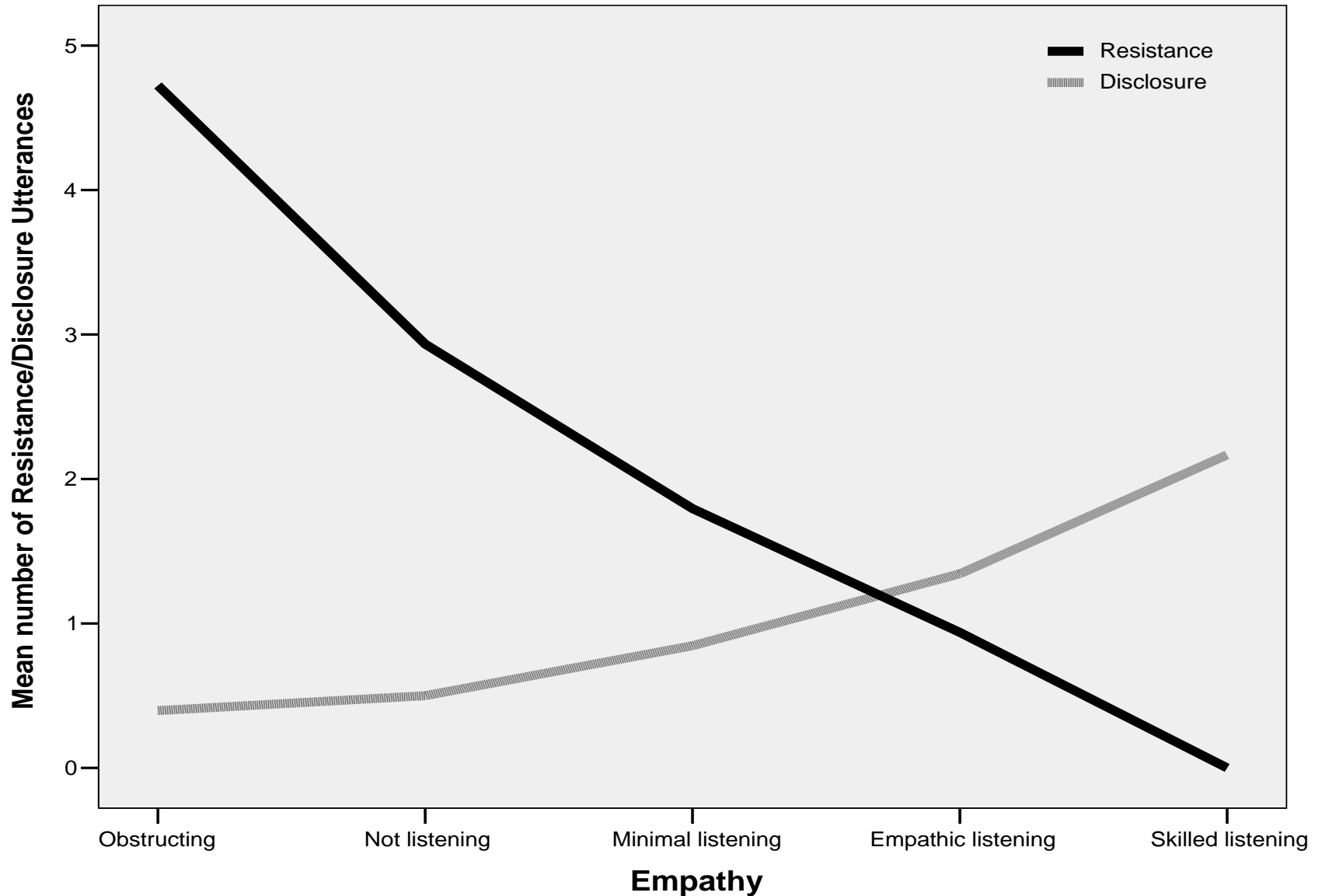
Essex Promotion of a Relationship Based Approach

- We have invested time, attention and energy to how social workers spend their time, mode of operating and how frontline managers support this
- We are researching the significance of emotional intelligence to this approach
- The thing that is common to all social workers is the world of the home visit...
- How often do we unpick this?

The Practice Cycle: The Intimate/Flowing Pattern



Empathy and Client Resistance and Disclosure



Supervision

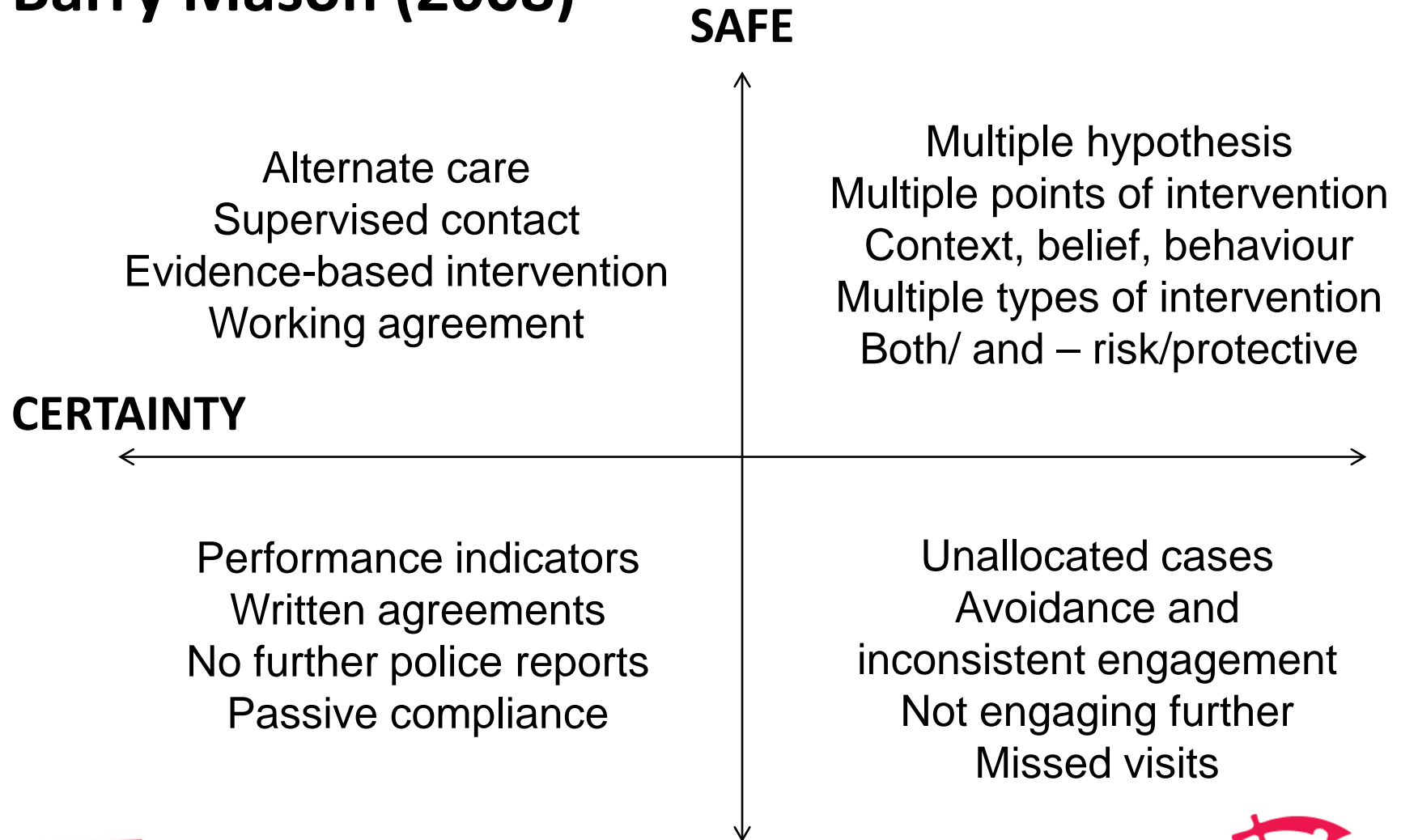
Is it an emotionally informed thinking space?

How does it support active, brave, risk sensible practice?



“Towards Positions of Safe Uncertainty”

Barry Mason (2008)



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PROFESSOR BRID FEATHERSTONE.....

- We need to be less concerned with family type or categories and more with the relationships and histories of those involved with children
- Positively involved men – good evidence of the difference they can make to boys and girls
- Compelling concerns about very vulnerable men with histories of instability and addictions making partnerships with equally vulnerable women (with children)
- Compelling evidence that practitioners struggle to have helpful conversations about such men with women or with the men themselves.

Professor Sue White

... humane professional judgement...

- **You must know your children, families or individual adults relationally, empirically, compassionately, analytically**
- Don't take syntheses of research entirely on trust
- Read the primary evidence or authoritative reviews
- Find your own primary evidence
- There are no technical fixes e.g. A call centre probably won't help manage demand and neuroscience has emerging clinical uses, but it **can't** help you decide when and whether to remove individual **asymptomatic** infants and children
- Nurture organisational cultures which encourage questioning, humility and therefore promote wisdom.

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QUESTION TWO

Talk to the people sitting near you:

How do you think social workers become good ?

do you create environment for social work practice to work well ?

VOTING

From your discussion what did you conclude?

Do you think the organisation that you work in, is one that facilitates Social work to flourish ?

YES

NO

Impact in Essex on Taking a Relationship Based Approach

Practice

- Reduction of children in care
- Reduction in children subject to child protection plans
- Reduction in caseload —————> better quality of work

Cost

- Reduced

Reinvestment and savings

- Early help
- Targeted intervention
- Intensive support

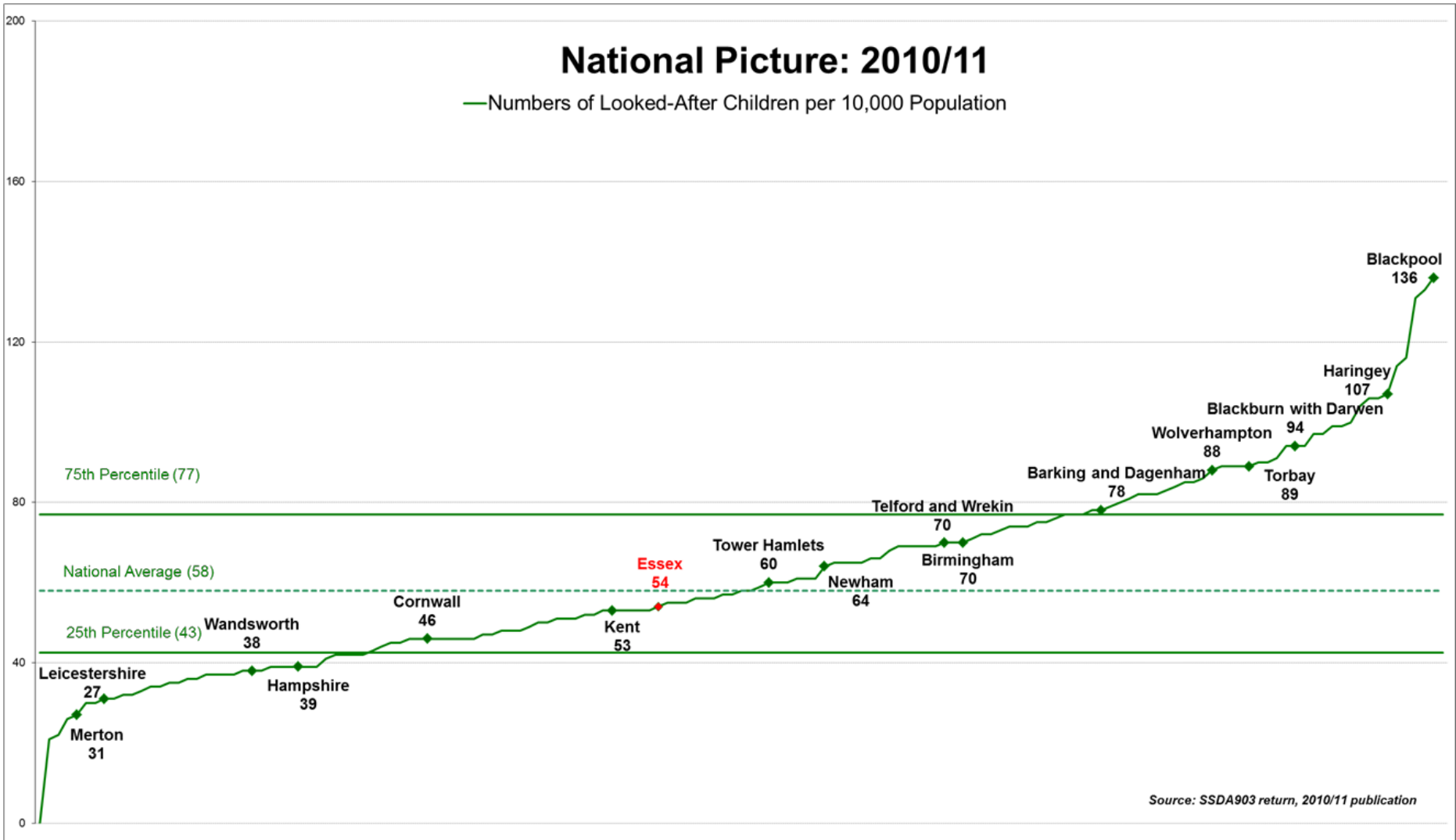
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Number of Children in Care	1,608	1,499	1,257	1,140

A placement strategy has been developed and is reviewed and updated for budget monitoring purposes and setting the medium term resource strategy. The table below gives an analysis of the historical spend.

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Internal Foster Placements	12.18	13.63	12.76	12.14
External Placements (Foster & Residential)	31.01	30.22	23.61	20.61
SGO's / RO's / Staying Put/ Supported Living	1.59	5.14	5.79	6.60
Internal Homes	7.83	6.53	1.91	1.76
Total	52.61	55.52	44.07	41.11

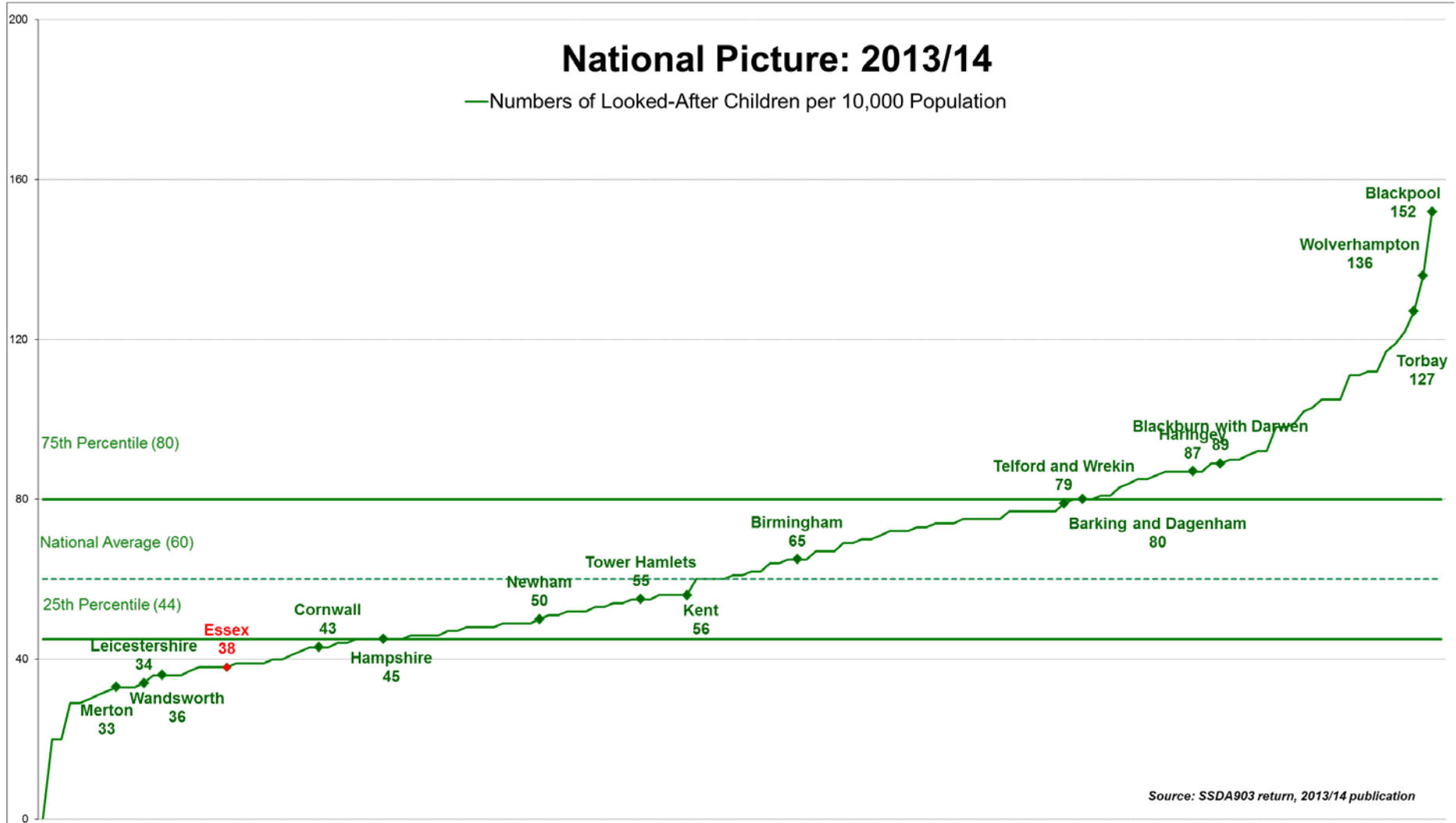
National Picture: 2010/11

— Numbers of Looked-After Children per 10,000 Population



National Picture: 2013/14

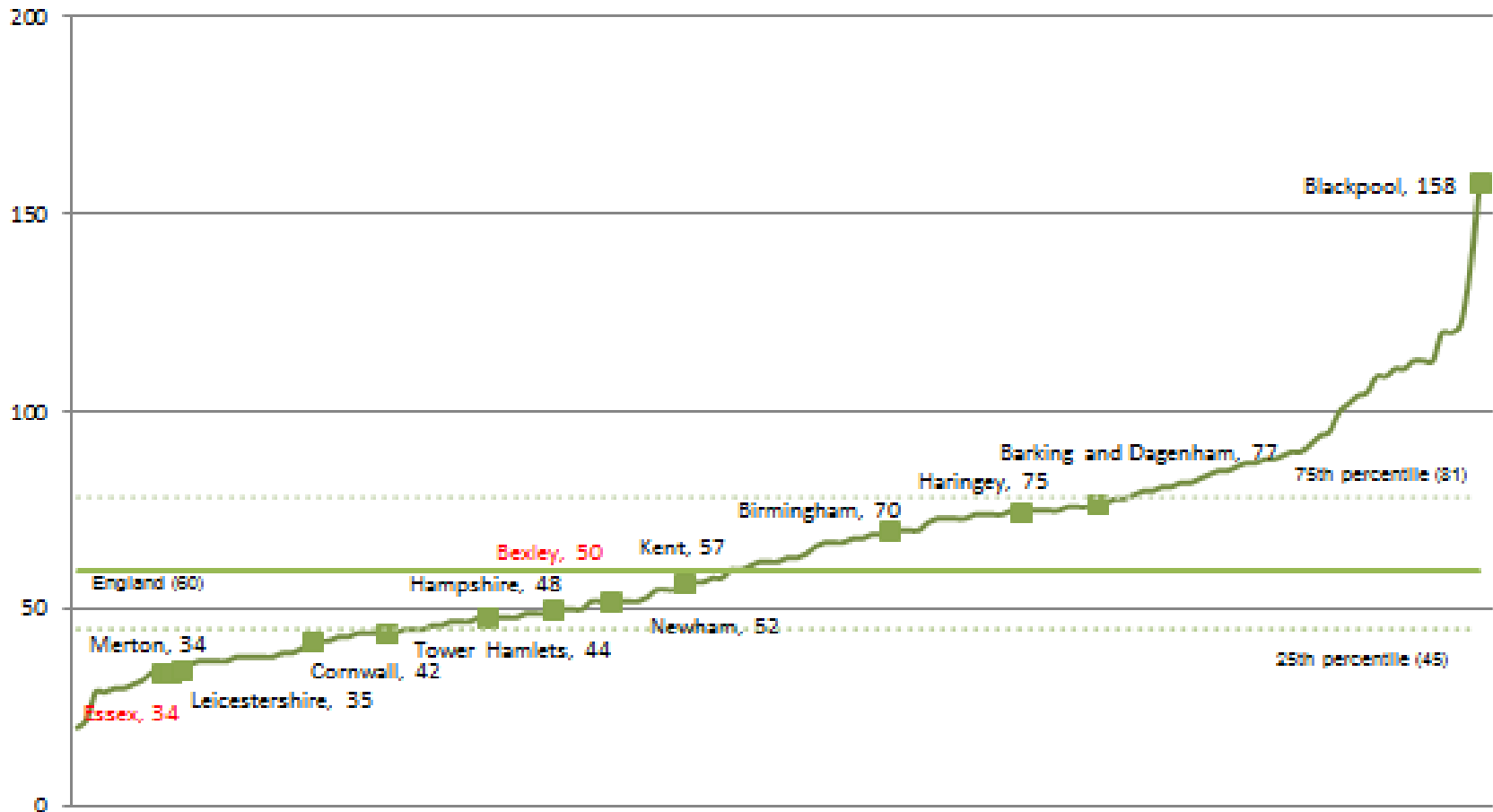
— Numbers of Looked-After Children per 10,000 Population



Source: SSDA903 return, 2013/14 publication

National Picture 2014/2015

-Number of Looked-After Children per 10,000





QUESTION three

Talk to the people sitting near you:

What are the values of the service you provide?

How do these values inform the decisions around taking children into and keeping children in care?

Who in your organisation prescribes the use of care? Social Workers? Schools? Health professionals? Police? Legal service?

VOTING

From your discussion what did you conclude?

Do you think nationally we have the right
children in care?

YES

NO

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Essex County Council

Relationship Based Partnership Work

- Relationship based social work isn't only about the direct relationship between the social worker and child/family.
- Also significant are the relationships within and external to the organisation.
- Confident, mature, partnerships *on the ground* mark a distinction between a fragile system and a strong sustainable system

Questions/Discussions?

