

BCP Building a Practice Framework – the influence of practitioner voice

Sharmeen Ziauddin:

Hi, and welcome to this Community Care webinar. Apologies for running a few minutes late. So today's webinar is called *Building a Practice Framework – the influence of practitioner voice*, and it's in collaboration with Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council's Children's Services (or BCP Council for short).

Thank you to all for joining. I'm Sharmeen Ziauddin, careers editor at Community Care. You may or may not be aware that BCP Council's Children's Services was rated inadequate in late 2021. Since then, the leadership, senior management and frontline practitioners have worked really hard to improve the way they work and improve the services they provide to children and families, and just one week ago, at the end of January, the latest Ofsted inspection report was published and gave BCP Council's Children's Services a rating of 'Good'. In just three years, BCP has turned things around, and underpinning that improvement has been the development of a new, bespoke practice model, which our speakers will be talking about today.

So our first speaker is principal social worker Leanne Morgan, and with her is team manager of one of the Children and Families First teams, Steph Hutson. But before I hand it over to them, just a bit of housekeeping.

You'll have the opportunity to ask questions, so if you would like to ask Leanne or Steph anything related to what they say then please feel free to put it in the 'Ask a Question' box on the right side of the screen. The questions will be selected and I'll put those questions to our speakers when they've finished their talk. If you want to ask a question anonymously then just add 'Anon' at the end of it and I won't read your name out.

If you're having any technical difficulties then try closing any application windows that may be open, and make sure the volume is up. If your screen freezes then try refreshing the page. If that fails then exit the page and come back. To enlarge the screen hover over the bottom left-hand corner, where you can access the volume control as well as a small square which will make this window full-screen.

So, we're not able to share the slides today but the recording of the webinar will be available in case you want to re-watch or share it with colleagues. It will be on the BCP Employer Profile and the Workforce Insights page on the Community Care website in the next few days. A link to the BCP Employer Profile can be found in the Resources tabs on the right-hand side.

Any questions that we don't get around to answering, BCP Council – well, Steph and Leanne – will try and answer privately after the webinar via email.

So before I hand it over, there is a quick poll that I'm just going to launch to ask what practice framework you're currently working within. So, once I launch that the options are 'trauma-informed', 'restorative', 'Signs of Safety', 'family safeguarding model', 'hybrid' or 'bespoke'. And that's just going to help Leanne and Steph gauge what kind of things people are doing at the moment. So I'll launch that in just a sec but I'm just going to hand it over to Leanne and Steph now. [0:03:16.5]

Leanne Morgan: Thank you, Sharmeen. Hello everyone. Thank you for tuning in. I'm Leanne Morgan and I'm the principal social worker, and I'm really looking forward to speaking to you all today alongside my college, Steph. Do you want to say hi, Steph?

Steph Hutson: Hiya!

Leanne Morgan: So before we get started, if we could think about the results of that poll, that would be helpful. So hopefully...

Sharmeen Ziauddin: Yeah. Just give it a few minutes, Leanne, just to collate the results.

Leanne Morgan: Okay.

Sharmeen Ziauddin: And then ask me in a few minutes and then I'll get back to you.

Leanne Morgan: Okay. So I'll get started then and I'll come to you at the end of Slide 1, if that's okay, Sharmeen.

Sharmeen Ziauddin: Okay.

Leanne Morgan: Okay. So I really love a good analogy, and from the beginning the idea of a seedling bursting into flower was one that seemed to fit our practice framework. But we needed to have the belief and confidence in the direction that we were going in. So I started as principal social worker in BCP Children's Services back in November 2023, just at the very start, inception, of the idea that we wanted to change our practice framework from Signs of Safety to something else. And the something else at that time was a big question mark.

So, when thinking about, okay, direction-finding and scoping that out, I started with the belief that our colleagues would welcome the opportunity to be hands-on in developing a new practice framework. I certainly believe in 'doing with', not 'doing to'. And I think that growing our framework, in my head, was about the nurturing of a seedling, and testing out the ground, adding the right level of fertiliser and light and water for that seedling to grow.

I'd come to BCP Children's knowing that the pace of improvement was significant, the direction and trajectory of improvement was positive. So I was determined that I wanted to kind of get in and understand where practitioners were at, and I used my new role as PSW to do that. [0:05:47.6]

So, right from the start it was about understanding practitioner context, seeking practitioner advice. And that went on to underpin the approach. So, as you might have noticed, however, I didn't talk about planting a seed. And that was quite purposeful because I already understood that those seedlings were growing. They were growing out there in the practice flowerbed, if you will. Because it was clear from those Ofsted monitoring visits, as I said, the trajectory of travel was really good. Our own quality assurance activity was reassuring us that practice was developing. And not only that, it was improving at pace. Colleagues in the service were clearly driving change for the better, and they were securing positive outcomes for children, young people and families as they were doing so. And there was an increase in confidence being heard from practitioners, who were articulating their practice very well in a myriad of different forums across the service and the system.

So there were some areas of real strength and shine. And one of those areas was relational practice. That was really strong. Us gathering the voice and representing the voice of the child was also an area that was strong, and that was evident within the child's record where in BCP Children's we write to the child, and that was starting to become consistent across the service. And we were making sort of rapid inroads towards improving our working relationships with multi-agency partners to ensure that the right support at the right time was being considered as part of our plan for intervention alongside our children and families.

So that, to me at the time, indicated that the seedling had made a really strong start. It was actively growing. And so, you know, we could have thought about at that time whipping it out and replanting something else. But imposing a framework rather than choosing to nurture what was already there and continuing to grow our own. And you won't be surprised to learn that the latter approach is exactly the approach that we decided to take.

And on that note around frameworks, how are we doing with the poll outcome, Sharmeen? [0:08:22.7]

Sharmeen Ziauddin:

Right. So it's quite varied, actually. So we have 27% of people said 'trauma-informed'. The next one was 16% 'Signs of Safety'. The next biggest was 14%, which was 'systemic practice'. And 13% 'bespoke', 13% 'hybrid', and the rest is 7% 'restorative', and I think the same amount for 'family safeguarding'. So that's what we've got so far. But the poll is still open if anybody hasn't clicked.

Leanne Morgan:

Steph, if you could just click onto the next slide, please.

So, for me, I'm not surprised at that because I think that echoed the research that we started the project off by undertaking across LAs around England and some LAs where I live in Wales. We looked at all of the different types of practice framework or practice models that were out there, and there were a lot. And we know that the DfE have been supporting various frameworks for a number of years now. So that period of research and information about that practice framework landscape, the national direction of travel, accompanied a re-look at our local landscape in terms of the prevalent and emerging need.

So, we decided that definitely having a co-produced approach was one that we were passionate about undertaking. We wanted to offer practitioners at that time a place where they could have a really strong voice and feel quite empowered and safe to shape how the framework looked. But also, another thing that's important to me is about how working within that framework would feel for practitioners, and whether it complemented their professional knowledge and skills and experience, rather than teaching them to do something new. I think that if we'd gone in with that approach we would lose some of the wealth of wisdom and experience that already existed within our workforce that had taken us as far as we had got at that point. [0:10:44.9]

So, taking that approach offered us the advantages of hearing directly from practice but building investment and buy-in, which won't be a surprise to you. So we took the time to understand where colleagues were, how they were feeling. And again, I took the opportunity to build that into my 'getting to know you' sort of work as part of a new principal social worker. And what that turned into was a real robust temperature check of where practitioners were, and within the myriad of different changes that had been going on in the system at that time as part of the improvement journey.

And that was important. So we were kind of...our indicators at that time were also evidencing that we were moving out of compliance and into quality. And that can be much harder work and bring a different raft of changes and expectations with it. So I wanted to be mindful of what that meant for practitioners on the ground who were still undertaking business-as-usual alongside absorbing all of that sort of systems change. [0:11:48.4]

So, we decided that the basis of our model would be the three Cs that you see in front of you right at the centre of the circle here. So the first one was Connecting, and that meant connecting in a variety of ways. We had to maximise our opportunities to get the conversation started, first of all. And that also included busting some myths and making clear our direction of travel with our former framework, 'Signs of Safety'. It meant that upfront we needed a robust communication strategy, for example. It ensured that we utilised traditional and non-traditional methods of getting the message out to colleagues that the practice framework was something that we wanted to advance as a shared agenda for the service.

And the focus of these messages was about securing involvement but also making sure that we repeated that active invitation to get involved and help shape our direction of travel. That was somewhat of a culture change and we learnt at times – and I particular learnt – that at times busy people don't read their emails or newsletters. So we had to be slightly more creative and a little bit more innovative about that. And that innovation, as a side product, led to the creation of a Children's Services intranet, which is due to go live shortly. So it's just different things. It also led to us being involved in things like podcasts. All sorts of stuff that hadn't been done previously. Bite-sized news shots that began to create the buzz around the direction that we were taking. [0:13:26.1]

Looking back on it now, it was really hard work. That was a lot of hard work at the front of the project whilst we were also building the bones of the project at the same time. And it took lots of time and energy. But I learnt certainly some valuable lessons there that were influential when we got to the stage of needing to roll our learning programme out.

And once we'd established the connection, the goal was to keep it going. So, the next C was Consultation. So, we had started with beginning consultation sessions which focused on, 'What did a practice framework mean to our practitioners? What would they want from a practice framework which honed the thinking?' And then we used our research to think about what practice framework models then might fit.

So, these consultations were well-attended from the start. We had been actively inclusive. We included all of our social care colleagues, including those from education. And the views of those colleagues from Consultation One, we were careful to make sure that they directly informed the content of Consultation Two and subsequent consultations. So every time we started with, 'Okay, let's look back at what we talked about and agreed together. Let's think about what happened after the meeting. Which forum did we take that to? What was the result of that?' So all along, colleagues could see and feel that they had been heard and that their views were valued and considered.

So, difference in opinion was celebrated. It was invited. And it was clear that we were exploring, and it was okay if the ground felt spongy underfoot. It was okay not to have the answers. It was a very safe exploration and learning space.

So, from these sessions practitioners decided that there were two stand-out frameworks that resonated with them and where they felt their practice was in BCP Children's at the time. So, a hybrid framework emerged based on restorative practice and trauma-informed approaches. And the feedback from those consultation sessions fed directly into our strategic leadership and senior leadership team, who gave agreement to proceed. And that consultation model has continued and is also now being widened out to our multi-agency partners as the journey progresses. [0:16:02.5]

So the last C was Co-production. And so, making co-production a reality in a busy Children's Services whilst it's in improvement again takes a lot of energy, and we had some challenging times and moments. We knew that, though. We figured that we'd understood by that time areas where we might have some pushback or slight resistance in the system. We knew what other comms were going out about some systems changes, so we needed to kind of hold onto things and be mindful about when we introduced things to colleagues and ideas to colleagues. And all of that was really appreciated. We used the comms strategy and the momentum gathered from the consultations as launch points for further activities. So we really were thinking about learning across a whole myriad of platforms, learning about the approach, learning about what our colleagues wanted to see, learning about what the system wanted, learning about how we

could amalgamate these and make something that was valuable but meaningful and impactful.

So, we also learnt that co-production needed a variance in the type of opportunities to co-produce that you presented out there. So, it went...we had again, and we still have, a lot of different opportunities to get involved, from regular keeping-in-touch meetings to more traditionally shaped task-and-finish groups, staff surveys, feedback, whole-service events, bite-sized drop-ins, my 'Meet the PSW' sessions. And overarching all of that was, once we kind of realised our practitioners had put their foot into restorative practice, we began to role-model the principles of restorative practice within the creation of the model itself. So we were ensuring that relationships remained central to our roll-out, that there was reflective space built in to consider challenges as well as opportunities, there was recognition of the learning journey and the impact of that from practitioners that were already maintaining a highly placed improvement trajectory. And it also meant that we had to remain cognizant of the practice landscape, the experience and emotions of our colleagues. And that has remained important to us and at the centre of our approach ever since. [0:18:38.1]

So, next slide please, Steph.

Okay. So, we understood then that we had to nurture the growth of the seedling in lots of different ways, and that there were many different routes to the project that had to work together to continue to nurture the seedling.

So, one of the benefits – and conversely one of the risks – of undertaking this type of approach to implementing the practice framework is that it actually doesn't train everybody at the same time. It's much more organic than that. And we had to recognise that this meant that different areas of the service would begin to embed the framework at different times, and think about the opportunities and the risks around that.

So, whilst that brought opportunities to maximise expertise, it also brought risk around the fact that perhaps a team manager of that team might have had a few practitioners go on their framework training, whereas that team manager's opportunity to go on the training hadn't taken place yet. And so there was something about building confidence and holding practitioners at this time, making sure that the right environment was there for sharing knowledge and practice wisdom and experience, again in a space that recognised that we were exploring and we were learning, and that learning was happening and different times for different people, as well as obviously we all learn in different ways and we implement that into our experiential practice in different ways. [0:20:18.8]

So, what we did was we made sure from the outset, when we had brought together this quite significant project plan – it is quite big – that we wanted SLT to understand that consolidating the learning and the transfer of that learning into practice was going to be as equally important as achieving 100% fully trained rate, and that consolidation and making sure that we had a part of the project in terms of the time

it was going to take us to embed the framework meant that we could build confidence and again launch off certain aspects and points in the project plan that were kind of key milestones.

And we also recognised that establishing a practice community would be critical to any success of embedding the framework. And so it was kind of helping our senior leadership team to understand that this wasn't about managing the task of implementing the framework. This was much deeper and had much deeper roots than that.

And they were totally on board with it. We were really fortuitous, I think, in the fact that our senior leadership team were willing to step into what was some innovative and vulnerable space at that time for a local authority who were rated as inadequate then. But they were up for it and they wanted to support practitioners to have the best experience but also ensure they had the best opportunity to deliver that framework in a successful way that made a difference out there in the real world with our children and families. [0:21:58.6]

So, how did we establish that practice community? Steph, onto the next slide, please.

Well, it was quite a big ask. So interestingly, when we had the consultations, one of the major things that practitioners were very, very clear about was, 'If you're going to ask us to do this, we want two things. One is the commitment to doing it, that this is not going to change a few years down the line, that we're going to commit as a Children's Services to this project and this framework. And the other is that if we are taking this on and we are learning and we're going to do things in different ways, we want some protected, reflective time to enable us to be lifted out of the frontline of practice and think about what that learning is looking and feeling like, how it's developing, and how we are sharing that with our colleagues from across the service.' So it was about...we didn't want to just be doing this in our teams. We recognised that we need to be looking wider, we need to be thinking up and outside of ourselves.

So, we did...we put the KIT meetings in. They were meant to be keeping-in-touch meetings. And those have been very well-attended. We're a year into the project now, and those KIT meetings are just changing to restorative practice huddles because the conversations in those meetings were changing, 'cause stories from practice, following the learning were starting to come to us. So we decided to use that space in...decision that was taken in collaboration with our colleagues, of course, to change that into restorative practice huddles, where we can talk in a bite-sized way about something that went well, something that we've tried that was new, perhaps something that didn't go quite so well, and how do we learn from that. So those are happening every month. [0:24:00.0]

We've created...we've looked at the learning offer that's come from our academy. And there's a new curriculum offered due to launch in April 2025. And a lot of work has gone into aligning all of the learning opportunities within that curriculum to not only the progression journey for our practitioners but also the framework principles of both restorative practice and trauma-informed approaches. So you will get

a synergy in every academy learning opportunity that a social care colleague attends, there is a synergy and you will be able to see the threads of our framework running through all of those.

Also, all of the new learning opportunities also now have moved away from the more traditional teaching approaches to the more workshop-style sessions where they are content-light and practice-heavy. What that means is every single one of our learning opportunities has opportunities for practitioners to reflect on what they're learning within the session, but also have time to talk about and bring in what their experiential learning, knowledge and wisdom is from outside of that learning session. So again, building multifaceted learning opportunities. [0:25:21.7]

We've got our framework learning programme. So we've had to deliver a learning programme in restorative practice, which is a variance of three-day courses, half-day courses and a day course with various different colleagues within Children's Services, to the whole of the Children's Services workforce. That is a lot of people. And we're currently coming to the end of our three-day rollout with our Priority 3 group, and we're moving into the lighter rollouts for colleagues that are not directly involved with children, young people and families.

We're also building currently and securing our trauma-informed approach learning programme. So we've taken again the learning from the first RP rollout, and tweaked slightly how we're doing our trauma-informed rollout to maximise the building and nurturing of those learning communities.

We've got team manager reflective spaces. This was really important because again, we realised our team managers were absolutely critical to the rollout. They were supervising colleagues. They needed that space to again come up and out of practice but also think about what that could mean in terms of opportunities for the framework within their team spaces and what was getting in the way, whether that be systems, documents, templates or the way that we were structuring some of our things like family network meetings, for example. So those are continuing.

We have our wider learning community sessions due to roll out at the end of this month, and that's an open session that takes a little bit longer for everyone to come to and access. And during those the plan is that we will undertake a restorative practice tool or activity and then bring a space for critiquing that alongside our colleagues, and again learning from each other. [0:27:23.7]

And we've also got some impact research planned for later on in the year. And we are now figuring out how we reach out to those with lived experience. Year One we focused very much on Children's Services and our partners. This year, Year Two, is going to be characterised by looking wider but actually seeking the experience of those with lived experience of our services to think about, 'Well, how does this feel for you? What have you detected that's different? How is this helping you get to where you want to go as a family? How is this helping you sustain change that's positive?' And that is a

massively important part of the project and something that our Children's Rights and Engagement team are going to be involved with as we move forward. [0:28:13.0]

So, you can see that there's lots going on. And without further ado, just to kind of think about how this has impacted on that team landscape and how it's felt in practice, I'd like to hand over to my colleague, Steph. [0:28:28.8]

Steph Hutson:

Okay. Thanks, Leanne. So as stated, I'm one of the team managers within BCP, where we've started to implement the restorative practice model. As Leanne has mentioned, the practitioners within our service were already leading the way with this model by building positive relationships with the families that they are working with and advocating for, so having them a part of building this model and hearing their voices was absolutely imperative.

So, within the area of the service that I work in, it's all about continuing to improve those relationships with the families that the assessment teams have already started to build. A critical part of our relationship-building right from the point of transfer is to be assured that the children, young people and their families are clear about any concerns that we may have for them, and the direction of travel that we want to move in together. We are very much focused on establishing what the shared outcomes are and look like. Working restoratively means that we can be assured that we are working towards those outcomes together whilst opening up the space for healthy, challenging curiosity, which we all know can be difficult discussions at times but are very much needed. And this is a part of our high challenge, high support approach, which all of our practitioners have learnt about during their RP training.

So as you can see on the slide, we've got the four windows whereby our workers can be providing families with low support and high challenge (also known as the 'doing to' box). They can provide high support but low challenge (known as 'doing for'), low support and low challenge (which is not doing anything), and finally the box with high support, high challenge. Ideally this is the box that we want all of our workers to be working within when supporting our families, and it's also known as the 'doing with'. [0:30:17.5]

Although we need to be mindful that there'll be times that the practitioners will need to move to providing low support, high challenge and high support, low challenge, this is only ever temporary, with the aim to be providing high support, high challenge the majority of the time. This allows for families to be fully aware of the worries and the concerns that the professionals hold but also supporting them to make the changes needed to improve outcomes for their children and young people.

All of our workers have now attended the restorative practice training, and the feedback from the majority of the workers after this is them saying, 'But we are already working *with* our families,' as per the picture on the slide, and therefore this way of working is just building on the knowledge that they already hold, focusing in on being

purposeful in terms of planning interventions, and also increasingly considering the impact. [0:31:08.4]

Currently within our team we have started to use solution-focused circles within our team meetings, whereby a worker will discuss a child and a family that they're currently working with. They will provide an overview of the situation for the family and any barriers that are impacting their work. There is then an opportunity for questions for clarification before moving onto the practitioners sharing ideas and possible solutions to better the outcomes for that child.

The feedback from doing these solution-focused circles already has been really positive, with workers reporting that they leave the circle feeling quite empowered to implement the ideas that they might not have considered previously. We've also picked up that this approach is transferable to use with families, so at the moment we are starting to look at using the solution-focused circles within our family network meetings, and this allows for a strengths-based approach that empowers families to focus on their own resources and support network by focusing discussions on solutions and achievable goals restoratively. With this, we hope to increase the family's motivation alongside our workers continuing to provide the high support and high challenge that was on the previous page. [0:32:21.3]

As a team manager, I'm also starting to implement restorative practice within supervision, which is leaving the workers feeling assured that the model is underpinning their practice. The three bubbles that you can see on the screen allows for good, reflective prompts around what is happening for the family and intervention services, but also leading to the practitioner into hypothesising. The prompt questions include, 'What were you thinking at the time? How have you been affected? How have you felt since? What do you think we need to do now?' and, 'What else needs to happen?'

As a team manager, this offers me reassurance to know that the workers have been gathering and building an understanding of the family's lived experience, which is informing their intervention in a restorative way. It also ensures that my discussions with my workers are reflective, rather than just solution-focused. As this is a bedding-in, I can now start to see the impacts on the child, and it's allowing us to see what the outcome needs for sustained change, which is what we're all working towards. So for me, I'm seeing my team moving forward working together, continuously learning and embedding the new practice, and we're constantly reminding ourselves to connect before correct.

Now I'll pass you back to Leanne to finish off our slides. Thank you. [0:33:38.3]

Leanne Morgan:

Thank you, thank you. So, as the slide says, like seed to bloom, progress is a journey, not just a destination. And back to our seedling. It's certainly growing but there's more growing to do yet. I think we've been given a really huge boost with the result of our Ofsted full inspection, and I'm inordinately proud of all of the Children's Services colleagues that I work alongside in BCP. They've done a fantastic job. And it's really reassuring to be recognised the way that we have

been. We've jumped from inadequate to good, but we absolutely remain passionate about the positive changes to practice that our practice framework can bring. And we are more and more starting to articulate that in terms of the strength of that being seen in the positive outcomes for children and young people in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.

We're entering into Year Two of the project, which will be the final year of the project plan, 'cause it will be business-as-usual at the end of these two years. But that's going to see us move into delivering the trauma-informed learning programme, getting to grips with how our framework is reflected in our data management system and our templates and all of our policies, which is a really big, chunky piece of work. And we'll be actively, as I said, seeking the voice and experience of those children and young people and families that we work alongside, as well as continuing to build on professional partner relationships.

We have our first restorative practice conference coming up at the end of March to celebrate all our completers on their learning programme. And again, we're going to be doing all of this whilst continuing to nurture and grow our practice community, learning from our progress as we grow and maintaining our commitment, those three Cs – Connection, Co-production and Consultation.

So, thank you very much for listening. I hope that this has provided some interesting thoughts for you, and hopefully there's the time for questions. [0:36:04.4]

Sharmeen Ziauddin:

Thank you, Leanne and Steph. That was really insightful. We've got a few questions so I will just go to them. Before I do that, though, I just want to say congratulations on that Ofsted rating, and as you mentioned, jumping from inadequate to good in three years, I think that's quite unheard of. So it just goes to show the strength that your...Children's Services and everybody in it who have worked so hard to get you where you are. So really well done on that.

So, the first question in regard to co-production, you may have covered this, but to what extent were you able to seek the views of children and parents or carers on the practice framework they would find most effective? Was that something that you took into consideration? [0:36:59.3]

Leanne Morgan:

Yeah, we did. A great question, by the way. We did this by our children's writing engagement team primarily, and also we have a co-chair of our corporate parenting board. We have two young people's groups, Insight and Inspire, who are looked-after children and are care-experienced young people, and we used those as ways in because at that time there was a lot of...our wider children's plan for BCP was being renewed so there was a lot of consultation going on across the BCP area around that.

So, we had a limited amount to feed back and we've recognised that that's something that we needed to improve. So we've...that's the next part of the project in this coming year. So yeah, hopefully that helps answer the question.

Sharmeen Ziauddin: Okay. Thanks for that. So, the next question is from Pippa. 'How are you measuring the uptake of social workers' use of the model, and what impact is it having for families? Are you seeing reduction in numbers of children in care, children on child protection plans etc.?' [0:38:18.3]

Leanne Morgan: Okay. Thank you for that, Pippa. It's a bit early to tell yet because we're still in that organic delivery. So we haven't had all of our practitioners go through our PE learning programme. But the way we are measuring it is via updates and a refresh of our quality assurance framework to capture those aspects of restorative practice. We've got other quality assurance activity. We have evaluations after all of our learning opportunities, which we then circle around and follow up. And we're starting to follow that up as part of the learning community also. So there's a varied...various ways that we're touching base with that.

We are going to be doing some firmer understanding of that in terms of, for instance, the data that you spoke about in your question, but it is just a little bit too early to tell because at the moment improvements in that area could be wrapped up with other improvement activity that the service has been engaged in, you know, prior to our Ofsted inspection. So we need to be careful about what we learn in terms of identifying exactly where that's come from and what's been influential.

Sharmeen Ziauddin: Okay. We have a question from Anne. 'Do you have a solution-focused circle template to follow in the meetings you hold?' [0:39:50.7]

Leanne Morgan: Steph?

Steph Hutson: Yeah, I'll answer that one. So yeah, we do, to be honest. And that comes from the RP training that we've undertaken. So at the moment that's the template that we're sticking to, that I discussed with a worker bringing a case, discussing a child, the family, the situation, the barriers that they may be facing, what's working with that family. And then that allows us to move on by following that. It allows us to move onto kind of some clarification questions around that, and then eventually providing some ideas from other practitioners that they might not have thought of. So yeah. And all of our practitioners are trained within that as well.

Sharmeen Ziauddin: Okay. There's a question from Stephanie. A different Stephanie! 'What elements of the SOS framework, if any, did you use, or did you change completely?' [0:40:46.2]

Steph Hutson: Great question.

Leanne Morgan: Signs of Safety. Sorry, yeah.

Leanne Morgan: Yeah. We actually changed completely. We've kept...hmm, we kept family network meetings. Some of our templates still reflect quite a lot of the Signs of Safety language, as in wellbeing goals, safety goals. But those are going to be addressed in this part of the project that's coming up around those templates. 'Cause what's happened is our practitioners have been really creative in using those templates to kind of squeeze the restorative practice in and around them. So they

haven't seen them as a barrier to continuing to embed the restorative practice. They've kind of used them quite creatively.

That is the only Signs of Safety practice I would say that is still sort of visible. The rest, our conferences now, our child protection conferences are all restorative. They are no longer Signs of Safety. So yeah, it's actually...we've made quite a distinct departure from it.

Sharmeen Ziauddin: Okay. Thank you, Leanne. There's a question from Anon. 'What has been the resource behind implementing this? Was it within the academy or was it outside of the academy, employee-wise?' [0:42:16.5]

Leanne Morgan: It was outside of the academy. So, there's myself, a project manager and a communications subject matter expert consultant. And that's the project team, alongside my line manager. And then the academy is supporting in terms of delivering the curriculum where the restorative practice training and trauma-informed training will be part of an ongoing, rolling programme for new starters and anyone that needs to refresh. So actually, at the moment it's not taking any of our academy resource because we've funded the learning offer and we've...we went to leaders in those fields in order to deliver the learning offer, to make sure that we had a quality learning opportunity offered to all of our colleagues.

Sharmeen Ziauddin: Okay. A question from Anna. 'What were your biggest challenges with implementing and how did you overcome?' Big question! [0:43:28.3]

Leanne Morgan: Yeah. Hang on. Okay. I suspect both Steph and I can answer this, 'cause we'll have our different perspectives. Whilst I gather my thoughts, Steph, have you got...?

Steph Hutson: Yeah, absolutely. I think from my perspective, obviously the challenges are more around kind of implementing it within the social work teams and the day-to-day practice. And I suppose some of the challenges that we've come across are maybe the workers who obviously have previously worked within Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch when they were separate local authorities and done previous Signs of Safety training and are very, you know, very keen to stick with those, what they've learnt and developed. So I think kind of keeping the wording, keeping it alive in the office, continuing to discuss it, getting that training in place for everybody, has been really, really important. And like Leanne referred to, the monthly meeting that we have that all practitioners have been invited to, all of that's really important to keep moving so we can, you know, share those anxieties but also kind of put those to rest as well.

Leanne Morgan: Yeah. Now, interestingly Steph, I would have said practically the same thing but from the wider perspective. It was about establishing the momentum in the first place and getting that co-production and that connection and, you know, bringing people on board in a way that they were able to trust in that approach and be committed to that approach alongside the project team.

But following that is keeping the momentum going and keeping it alive, and finding ways to bring people along who might be a little bit more reticent. So we've had a great response in terms of practitioner

enthusiasm. I mean, really all of our learning opportunities have been so well-attended. You know when you get a drop-off, but we haven't had any of that. Our practitioners have shown up consistently, they've completed their feedbacks consistently and it's all been positive. It's, 'Okay, how do we capture the stories from practice and share those in a way that keeps that momentum alive and keeps the model building?' I think that is going to continue to be the challenge moving forward.

Steph Hutson:

So I think if I can add to that, Leanne, one of the positive things that is going to be happening is we're going to have champions in place for restorative practice. And these are the practitioners that are kind of, 'We're going to be in the office. We're going to be around the office anyway.' So actually, for those people that are maybe struggling a little bit more, there's always going to be access to someone to discuss that with. So it's very much going to be kind of there.

Leanne Morgan:

Thanks, Steph.

Sharmeen Ziauddin:

Okay. So another question – they're coming in thick and fast, you'll be happy to know! – from Amy. 'You speak about hearing from children and young people around their lived experience. Can I ask what plans do you have to engage with children and young people?' [0:46:39.6]

Leanne Morgan:

Yeah, you can. We have a number of different plans. We've got the more traditional routes. So we have our feedback routes. But what we have learnt is that feedback comes to us across the system in a variety of different ways and places, and we've not always been as smart as we could be about accessing that and feeding that into forums where it's going to have the maximum impact.

So we're looking at, 'Where are those points of synergy?' in terms of that feedback. We're also...part of the research project will be working directly with asking families who are working with us to be directly involved in that research project and help us understand what the impact of this way of working is directly on their lived experience, and feeding their voices in.

We have a number of learning events and conferences planned. We have practice weeks as well that go alongside our quality assurance activity, where we actively seek and bring in our children and young people and parents and carers into that. So we're going to be sort of maximising that opportunity.

And then we also have another arm of the framework project, is a feedback project in and of itself, which goes alongside a language that [unclear – 0:48:12.2]. That arm is really quite significant. It's a big project. And that feedback project is looking at, okay, we traditionally get feedback from the latter end of a child's journey through our service. So for example if a child's come into our care and is no longer living at home with their birth family, what about the children that experience our service at the front where we've had a positive impact and we're not working with them anymore, they don't have that experience. And we have a feedback project that's aimed at those children, specifically targeting and inviting that feedback for those children.

So yeah, it's kind of all going on. That sounds a bit piecemeal but it isn't, and again, as I said, our children's rights and engagement service is at the heart of that and is leading on some of that work alongside the children and young people that it currently works with who are shaping some of that work. So it's multifaceted.

Sharmeen Ziauddin:

Great. Okay. So another question, slightly different. 'Have you been able to make changes to your case management system to support the model and what difference has that made if you have or you haven't?' [0:49:31.9]

Leanne Morgan:

Well, that's like the million-dollar question, isn't it? Actually, we are in the process of making those system changes now. We've brought that aspect of the project forward actually, because we realise our practitioners are working around the templates that they've got – which is great – but they also need us to support them in their practice by having templates that do actively encourage and support the framework.

So we haven't got to that point where we've changed anything yet. Those are in production. So I'm sure everyone on the call will appreciate how challenging it can be sometimes in terms of resource when you have system changes and those systems are across Children's Services and we have a data management system called MOSAIC which can...it can bend and flex to a certain degree and we can change templates and workflows, but there's specific methodology around how we do that and when we do that.

So what we've done is we've started with the most-used templates and those drafts are coming together now. So we've not done it yet but we will be doing it. We know the scope of what we can and cannot do, given the system that we have.

Sharmeen Ziauddin:

Okay, great. 'What trauma-informed training are you offering?' asks Martin. [0:51:03.1]

Leanne Morgan:

Okay. So, we are...that's a really good question, Martin. It's going to be an introductory training to trauma-informed approaches. So it's quite light-touch. It does...without getting into too much detail, it does talk about vicarious trauma and wellbeing, it will talk about adverse childhood experiences, but it will be a starter-off module. And then throughout our curriculum offer there will be opportunities to undertake additional modules on trauma-informed alongside the trauma-informed offer from our safeguarding partnership. So yeah, that's where we're going at the moment.

Sharmeen Ziauddin:

Okay. And this is a really interesting question from Jason. 'Is there any anxiety to any changes in CE...' – so chief executive, directors – '...in Children's Services and consequently possible changes to your practice framework approaches?' [0:52:08.7]

Leanne Morgan:

I think I can confidently say no. Because the senior leadership team are as committed to this. They've all done their restorative practice training alongside practitioners. And interestingly, at my last meeting, the PSW session which was just about a fortnight ago, I think, we had our director of Children's Services, Cathy Hadley, at that session talking about what she had learnt from that restorative practice

training and being quizzed on how she was going to implement it at senior leadership level.

And so that was interesting because she'd taken some things and was talking about again bringing that into forums that were outside of Children's Services in the wider council, which is really interesting. Our elected member for Children's Services has also done the restorative practice training and is thinking about doing the same thing. So it's going to be interesting that those little tendrils of the model and the framework are going to be up and outside of us, which is encouraging. We will see what will come of that.

But our chief executive is very supportive of the direction that Children's Services is taking. So yeah.

Sharmeen Ziauddin: Okay. And I'm going to squeeze in one last question because we did start late, so I hope that's okay with everybody. So another question by Jason. 'Changes in work practice rely on a consistent workforce. Is the social work team manager workforce stable and do you see this as a challenge?' [0:53:46.6]

Leanne Morgan: Steph, I think you can answer that one!

Steph Hutson: Yeah, absolutely. So I would say we are absolutely stable at the moment. And I will be honest in when I say initially when we had our inadequate Ofsted rating the management very much were not stable at that point. However, I came back to BCP in 2022 and it was from there it's just...I was able to see it go from strength to strength. And one of the main changes was implementing the kind of stable management and all of our managers across the children-in-need and the child protection teams are all permanent members of staff, as are the assistant team managers. So yeah, we're very stable at the moment. And onwards and upwards!

Sharmeen Ziauddin: Okay. Thank you. So I think we've come to the end of the presentation. Leanne, was there anything you wanted to mention? [0:54:45.8]

Leanne Morgan: No. I think for any of you that might be thinking about joining us, hopefully we can put a link to a meeting for you to drop into in the chat that's happening next week, I think.

Sharmeen Ziauddin: So the recruitment event that Leanne is talking about is next week, on Thursday, and the invitation and the link to that is in the PDF in the Resources tab on the right of the screen, along with a link to the Employer Profile that I mentioned earlier. And this Employer Profile is part of the many things that we at Community Care do as part of our work with BCP Council to help with their recruitment and retention of their qualified social workers and their wider social care workforce.

So, I think we've covered quite a lot of ground there. Thank you, Leanne and Steph, for your time. I hope that was insightful for everybody watching. And as I said, we will be putting it on our website later on this week so look out for that.

Thank you to everybody for joining and watching. We'll see you next time. Goodbye for now.

Leanne Morgan:

Thank you. Bye.

Steph Hutson:

Thank you. Bye.