



Training for Social Workers & Multi-Agency Staff

Questioning of Children Training (various levels) - Warwickshire

Warwickshire offers a comprehensive training programme which ensures that all staff has access to core and specialist training to meet their development needs and areas of specialism to enhance their practice.

To further enhance the training package offered to Social Workers and multi-agency staff; Warwickshire are looking to offer specialist courses as follows. The aim of the training is to begin during the course of late 2018-2019.

Stage One - Foundation Level- Careful Questioning of Children

This would be designed for all practitioners working with children within a multi-agency context and will be aimed at newly qualified Social Workers and multi-agency staff such as Education, Health and Police. Further discussions are being undertaken with Triangle (training provider) in relation to offer this course within Warwickshire. The aim at present is to have a cohort of practitioners trained who can then deliver to a small number of practitioners on a regular basis across Warwickshire.

The aim of this training will be to enable staff to develop/ enhance the following skills:

- Be clear about the essential elements of good forensic questioning.
- Knowledge of child development.
- Understand which groups of children are particularly vulnerable to abuse and why.
- Know how trauma, impairment and disability can affect a child's communication.
- Have sufficient knowledge to make a brief initial assessment of a child's communication needs and identify when expert help is needed.
- Know how to quickly establish rapport with children, set clear expectations and introduce rules for communication.
- Recognise question types and use a range of open-ended questions and prompts.
- Have strategies for working with children in the presence of other adults.

Stage Two - Intermediate Level- Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) Training

Warwickshire County Council in conjunction with Warwickshire Police will be offering ABE training to social workers during the course of late 2018. The aim will be to train a cohort of 100 social workers within frontline teams by 2019.

The training will be certified and delivered over the course of 5 days by Police Officers which will look at the context of recent research, case law, current guidance and will help participants gain the knowledge for safe and effective interviewing of children. The training will consist of practice sessions which will allow participants to practice the skills learnt and receive feedback.

The aim of this training will be to enable social workers to develop/enhance the following skills:

- To develop skills in working with other agencies to investigate allegations of child abuse and to explore issues which impact on this process.
- Develop skills in information gathering for ABE interviews and Section 47 investigations.
- Develop skills in conducting interviews of children and young persons in accordance with Achieving Best Evidence.

Stage three - Specialist level - Forensic Questioning of Children

This is a very specialist course provided by Triangle who offer a five day, assessed programme which will enable participants to quickly and confidently:

- Establish rapport, set clear expectations and introduce communication rules.
- Assess children's communication needs (in relation to giving evidence).
- Undertake forensic questioning to a high evidential standard.
- Reflect on, critique and develop practice.

The course is very specialist and at present a Principal Social Work Practitioner from Warwickshire has attended a free place to evaluate of the effectiveness of the course. Once reviewed, Warwickshire will aim to send 5 Social Workers a year to attend this course. Those who attend the training would help us act as champions in offering advice and help in facilitating the stage one course.

The aim of this training will be to enable social workers to develop/ enhance the following skills:

- Be able to quickly assess children's communicative competence and needs, including children who are very young or traumatised or have communication impairments, and know when expert help is needed.

- Be clear about the essential elements of good forensic questioning based on evidence from recent research.
- Be able to use the right questioning techniques for each child (this means developmentally appropriate questioning based on assessment of their communication needs).
- Be confident about question types.
- Be able to recognise and code the key question types.
- Be able to quickly retrieve a range of open-ended questions and prompts and explain why they matter and know when leading or closed questions are appropriate.
- Have a range of strategies for:
 - Rapport building, rule setting and closure.
 - Exploring understanding of truth and lies to getting to the topic.
 - Separating out incidents.
 - Using communication aids.
 - Clarifying children's accounts.
 - Working with intermediaries.
 - Demonstrate their knowledge through a closed book exam.
 - Demonstrate their skills through a recorded assessment and interview with a child.
 - Explain their reasoning for the approach taken under cross-exam conditions.

For further information please contact Sarah Harris (Principal Child and Family Social Worker)/ Ramandeep Sandhu (Development Team Manager).