

# Reducing Parental conflict

A guide for practitioners



## Relationships Matter

Warwickshire County Council are committed to supporting our partners to feel confident in working with parents to reduce conflict in their relationships.



Warwickshire  
County Council

# What is Parental Conflict

Conflict between parents is a normal part of relationships and family life. Not all conflict is damaging, but the way conflict manifests– its frequency, intensity, and how it is resolved–can negatively impact on children.

Evidence has found that the quality of the relationships between parents, specifically how they communicate and relate to each other, has a significant influence on effective parenting and children’s long term mental health and future life chances.

**Conflict can affect children in all types of parental relationships, which can include:**

- Parents who are in a relationship with each other, whether married or not.
- Parents who have separated or divorced. Biological and stepparents
- Same sex couples
- Foster and adoptive parents and blended families

Where Parental Conflict is an issue for a family, support can be offered to families to find strategies that they can use to reduce the conflict, this may include a focus on parenting support which is available to help parents co-parent in a positive way.

More information about the Family and Relationships Support for parents can be found [here](#)

If safe and appropriate to do so, parents may attend a parenting course together; if not, parents can undertake the same course at different venues to enable them to receive the same information and support. The parents may then come to a mutual understanding on parenting styles, limits, boundaries and strategies to manage their children’s behaviour uniting them as parents whether parenting together or apart.



## Identifying Parental Conflict or Domestic Abuse

Conflict and abuse are not the same. Parental relationship distress is different from domestic abuse. This is because there is not an imbalance of power, neither parent seeks to control the other, and neither parent is fearful of the other.

Good practice would always support practitioners having a conversation with families to help them determine if they are experiencing Parental Conflict.

If practitioners are in any doubt they should refer to their agency's Domestic Abuse policy, or seek guidance from their line manager or from their local Early Help Hub Domestic Abuse worker.

If Domestic Abuse has been identified, the parent (victim/survivor) will be offered other support via [REFUGE](#) or [Family Intervention Counselling Service](#) can support both parties, and can then be referred back into parenting support once other work has been completed and is safe to do so.

For further information visit [Domestic abuse – Warwickshire County Council](#)

# What are we doing in Warwickshire?

## Support for families

Across Warwickshire, we're referring to the Reducing Parental Conflict Programme as "Family and Relationship Support".

We are pleased to announce we have developed a range of training opportunities for front line practitioners and supervisors. The aims are to raise an awareness of parental conflict, learn how to work with parents and navigate the tricky situations that parents in conflict can present with and how to effectively support and signpost.

Offering evidence-based support with the parent-child relationship alone is likely to be ineffective, where there is conflict between parents. Warwickshire has developed Family and Relationships Support offer that recognises that being a parent or carer was never going to be easy. In fact, it is probably the most demanding job you will ever have. Add in conflict and tension and it becomes even harder. Workshops and programmes are a great way to help you find new ways of supporting your children and each other, whether you are parenting together or separate. They can help you come up with new ideas, problem solve and reduce stress. You won't be alone with many of the concerns you have so it can be encouraging to recognise and build upon your existing skills at the same time as sharing and learning from other parents and carers.

## Support for practitioners

The ambition in Warwickshire is that families experiencing Parental Conflict are supported at the right time, by the right practitioner to prevent any impact of this conflict on children. Our aim is to increase awareness of Parental Conflict and the impact it can have on families, children, young people and their outcomes. In Warwickshire we are taking a practice led approach by providing workforce development opportunities.

All practitioners working with families should think about Parental Conflict. This involves all the organisations, agencies and services working with adults, those working with children and young people, and those who work with families. This includes but is not limited to Health services, the Police, Local Authority and voluntary and community and education.

### The training covers:

- Understanding Parental Conflict and its impact on Child Outcomes: How can I use the evidence base to support parent relationships?
- Recognising and Supporting Parents in Parental Conflict: Applying knowledge, skills and techniques
- Working with Parents in Conflict: How do I support, refer or intervene?
- Reducing Parental Conflict: The role of Supervisors and Managers: How can I support my frontline practitioners

You can book your place and explore the training opportunities available for colleagues in Warwickshire [here](#).

Practitioners can also get support via the 30-minute sessions with the RPC Coordinator and their peers to discuss strategies and how to work with families can be booked via our “RPC Clinics” [here](#).

Where practitioners are working with parents who have said they want to talk to someone about their relationship, the worker can support them to contact one of the Family Support Helpline for further advice and supportm **01926 412412** Monday to Friday 9am-4pm except bank holidays.

## For more information

For more information and for details of how to book onto training email [ehparenttrainers@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:ehparenttrainers@warwickshire.gov.uk)

