



Key Messages

Why do relationships matter?

Our relationships are one of the most important aspects of our lives. We often forget or misunderstand just how crucial our connections with other people are for our happiness. Good relationships make us content and fulfilled; yet poor relationships can also make us feel sad, afraid, or lonely. When family life is good, children thrive and if parents get on well together it is better for the children. Finding better ways to deal with conflict in the family and communicating in more positive ways helps children feel more secure: children are likely to feel happier, healthier and do better at school. There is extensive research and evidence that outcomes are not good when children and adults are exposed to poor relationships. Children who see adults working out relationship problems in a constructive way are more likely to follow this example and have better relationships with others and enjoy life.

Sometimes it can be hard to separate parental conflict and domestic abuse; Relationship matters' focus is on relationships where things are 'mostly respectful, equal and cooperative but experiencing difficulties. If there are concerns about controlling / coercive behaviour violence or fear, there is advice available from the [Calderdale Safeguarding Partnership website](#).

Why Reducing parental conflict is everyone's business?

Local government leaders and commissioners have a key role in reducing the impact of parental conflict on children by integrating this within the wider system of family support for health and wellbeing, working with parents in all agencies such as: the NHS, schools, the police and the voluntary sector. There is a need for a whole system approach that recognises quality relationships as a core shared objective across all services and champion the importance of tackling PC.

Why Strategic Commitment and Ownership is critical?

Strategic commitment to embedding RPC across all agencies within the LA will be a declaration of intent which will define the vision, goals and specific objectives needed to drive the RPC agenda. There will be a need to develop a clear action plan and decide how to get Parental Conflict / Relationship Matters on the agenda and intervene at meeting such as:

- Local Safeguarding Partnership for Adults and Children
- Strategic Partnership Boards
- Policing and Community Safety Partnerships
- Health and Well Being Boards
- Primary Care teams, Midwifery, Health visiting, Mental Health practitioners

- Early Help, Troubled Families
- Commissioned family services
- School Governing Bodies, Governors, Headteachers, Teachers & assistants
- Special Education Needs and Disability services

The Action plan will need to embed a new comprehensive approach to relationships across the LA community which will require a wholesale cultural change from Strategic Management to front line practitioners. It will be important to equip the workforce with the skills and knowledge they need. To deliver the strategy, it will need a wide range of agencies to detail specifically what they will do, who will be responsible for making it happen and within which time frame.

Why Community Ownership is important?

Raising awareness about the significance of parent's relationships to children's well-being is crucial to ensuring that the relevance of reducing parental conflict is not confined to professionals but is recognised by the community as an issue that has a knock-on effect for everyone. The RPC action plan will need to include the development of a communications proposal.

Why measuring RPC impact and Outcomes is essential?

It is critical that evaluation is part of local work to develop and commission relationship support: without this you will not know if or why services have worked or had an impact. This means collecting data on relationship conflict prevalence, understanding the links to Domestic Abuse, and taking a more robust approach to testing and learning about prevention and impact on children and families. All agencies across LA's will need to establish baseline PC data, understand ways of recording it and make sure systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the findings.

[Relationship Matters](#) is the partnership between 15 Local Authorities across Yorkshire & Humber regions.