



TEA-BREAK GUIDE



A focus on “What Works?”

Traditionally, case learning in safeguarding and child protection focuses on adverse events and concerns about poor practice. Many of the issues which have been identified in case reviews over the years continue to occur, and the same recommendations are made again and again with a focus on training, regular case audit, strengthening of procedures and so on.

You need to consider that more useful and powerful learning could be obtained by looking at cases where practitioners from partner agencies have worked well together, and in particular where this has led to better outcomes for children and families.

You also need to focus on understanding the specific factors that help frontline practitioners to support families to make changes.

You should recognise and celebrate good practice by individual colleagues in your own services and those of partner agencies, but also take the opportunity to think deeper and ask “what works” questions.

- What does a good multiagency assessment look like? What factors help to ensure that an assessment has captured knowledge about family’s history, strengths and difficulties from all relevant agencies?
- What works in engaging and building relationships with families, children and young people?
- What factors in the way your teams and services are organised help you to do a better job?
- When has supervision been particularly effective?

Identifying good practice and good outcomes

Traditional case learning from adverse outcomes is usually triggered by a very recognisable incident. Positive outcomes for children and families are achieved over time and may only be recognised by looking back on progress that has been made. There are various approaches you could take to embed recognition, reflection and learning from good outcomes and good practice:

- Building recognition of good practice into agendas for team meetings.
- Ensuring that you consistently seek feedback from families, children and young people, with the aim of learning about “what works” from families who recognise improvements in their lives, as well as responding to concerns.
- Capturing evidence of particularly effective multiagency working at specific points, such as stepdown from a child protection/child in need plan which has supported families to make positive and sustainable change.
- Learning from supervision with a focus on good outcomes. It may be particularly useful to bring cases which have caused high levels of concern back to supervision. If the situation for this child or family has improved, what factors made a difference in this case?
- Schools may be particularly well placed to recognise improvements in well-being, and positive outcomes such as academic achievements or participation and achievement in extracurricular activities, for children who in previous years were affected by the impact of family vulnerability and dysfunction.

Send a good practice/good outcome story to NSCP

Please send good practice/good case outcome examples to the NSCP business office as a word document or PDF.

As already noted, positive outcomes for children and families are achieved over time and may only be recognised by looking back and reflecting on progress that has been made. Learning from these cases may best be achieved by telling the story of the case as it has been experienced by the child or young person, their family, practitioners and teams.

We therefore do not ask you to complete a structured report or template but suggest the following headings or prompts to use when telling the story:

- What is this good practice/good news story about?
- What were the background concerns for the child or young person and their family? Was there a history of previous attempts to provide help or support?
- What has changed for the child/young person and their family now?
- “What works and why?” What factors do you think have particularly helped practitioners to complete a really good quality assessment, to engage with the child/young person or their family, to help families to implement and sustain change?
- Does your learning from this case prompt any suggestions about how our services or teams could work better to support other children and families?

These can be sent to the NSCP Business Office at nscp@northnorthants.gov.uk

What works for children, young people and families?

You need to make sure that you learn directly from children, young people and families about what is most important to them, and what they think has helped most of all if they have experienced positive changes.

If you are able to include feedback directly from children and families in your good practice/good outcome story, this may provide some of the most powerful learning.

Sharing good practice

The Local Learning Review Subgroup of the NSCP has “Learning from Good Practice” as a standing agenda item, and all the reports that we receive are discussed at the subgroup meeting.

Subgroup members directly represent or have links to all of the key agencies who work to support children and families in Northamptonshire. LLR subgroup members will disseminate case learning, including good practice examples, within their own organisations, with the aim of supporting and developing practice at the frontline level.

The LLR subgroup also maintains a database of all the good practice case examples we receive and will share thematic learning through NSCP newsletters, our annual report, and our training packages.

We hope that this focus on "what works", can be used to help commission, develop and improve services that allow frontline staff to work in the most effective ways, and to further improve outcomes for children and families.