



Early  
Help



One  
minute  
guide

## Relationship Matters - reducing parental conflict

### What do we mean by parental conflict?

In Hull we are committed to helping families make choices and develop their own solutions to the challenges they face. This includes helping parents where there may be parental conflict.

Evidence shows that frequent, intense and poorly resolved parental conflict can have a negative impact on children's mental health and long term life-chances. Across Yorkshire and Humberside, we're referring to the Reducing Parental Conflict Programme as 'Relationship Matters'.

Hull has developed a definition of Parental Conflict through consultation with a number of partner agencies, parents, children and young people:

'Parental Conflict can include regular bickering, arguing and frustration with each other about issues such as money, parenting or housework. When a child experiences this conflict frequently and it is unresolved, it could result in children feeling upset, confused or angry and affect their ability to resolve relationship problems throughout their lives and achieve positive outcomes'.

### Identifying Parental Conflict or Domestic Abuse

To identify Domestic Abuse please see the Domestic Abuse (guide).

However, sometimes it can be more challenging to differentiate between Domestic Abuse and Parental Conflict.

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

If appropriate, 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 love and limits, boundaries and strategies to manage their children's behaviour uniting them as parents whether parenting together or apart. For further information visit referral information and parenting courses on the Council parenting website.

If Domestic Abuse has been identified, the parents will be offered other support via DAP or Strength to Change and then be referred back into parenting support once other work has been completed.





Hull has adopted the Stefanou Foundation Intimate Relationship Spectrum to assist practitioners in determining whether families are experiencing parental conflict or domestic abuse. The spectrum includes the following relationship descriptions:

- Respectful, equal, cooperative, happy
- Mostly respectful, equal, cooperative but experiencing difficulties
- Conflictual, non-communicative, non-violent
- Situational couple conflict, abuse, violence both ways
- Controlling, abusive / behaviour
- Coercive control and physical harm, fear of violence / death

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.

## What are we doing in Hull?

We understand that conflict is an everyday part of life; our aim is to ensure that conflict is constructively resolved thereby modelling appropriate relationships where any differences are agreed amicably between adults.

The ambition in Hull 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 Hull we are taking a practice led approach by providing workforce development opportunities.

Hull is working with thirteen other Local Authorities within Yorkshire and Humberside to jointly commission a regional website and digital campaign for practitioners and members of the public. The website can be accessed by visiting [www.relationshipmatters.org.uk](http://www.relationshipmatters.org.uk)

## Who should think about Parental Conflict? And what training is available

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 sector

A multi-agency and multi-disciplinary training programme is available for practitioners and managers working with children and families and includes the following:

**Module 1 (e-learning):** Understanding Parental Conflict and its impact on Child Outcomes: How can I use the evidence base to support parent relationships?

**Module 2:** Recognising and Supporting Parents in Parental Conflict: Applying knowledge, skills and techniques

**Module 3:** Working with Parents in Conflict: How do I support, refer or intervene?

**Module 4:** Reducing Parental Conflict: The role of Supervisors and Managers: How can I support my frontline practitioners?

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 Early Help hubs.

## Key contacts or for more information

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

