

Tavistock Relationships and Harrow Council win key government grant

Tavistock Relationships and Harrow Council welcome the Department for Education's announcement, as part of its Safeguarding Grants programme 2016-2018, to fund their joint project to safeguard Harrow children affected by domestic violence.

Building on the experience of a successful pilot study initiated by Harrow Council in partnership with Tavistock Relationships, we will work with a further 30 families and deliver a training programme for up to 90 frontline practitioners to help them use evidence-based approaches in their work with families where there has been domestic violence. There will also be advanced training for Harrow clinicians drawn from Social Care, Child and Adolescent Mental Health, and other Harrow Council teams.

Commenting on the DfE's announcement, Andrew Balfour, Chief Executive of Tavistock Relationships, said:

"Safeguarding children is a key part of Tavistock Relationships' core mission, and so we are particularly pleased to be able to develop this collaborative work with Harrow. This project aims to keep children safe by working with parental couples, through giving them the opportunity to change the ways they communicate and resolve conflict; we will do this whilst being acutely sensitive to the risks involved. We look forward to helping more Harrow families and helping to train the current workforce in Harrow; we hope that this approach can become embedded within frontline practice in the future".

Parmjit Chahal, Head of Service at Harrow Council, said

"Innovation is the top priority for Harrow Council in improving outcomes and I'm delighted the DfE have supported our approach.

"We often deal with multiple instances of situational domestic violence with little change, leaving children repeatedly exposed to domestic violence, with damaging long-term potential effects. This funding gives us an opportunity to work to develop new ways of giving couples an opportunity, where it's safe to do so, to develop more effective techniques to resolve their conflict, without resorting to violence."

Ends

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Registered Charity Number: 211058. Company number: 241618 registered in England and Wales. The Tavistock Institute of Medical Psychology.

Notes to Editors

1. Established in 1948, Tavistock Relationships is a registered charity internationally renowned for delivering and developing advanced practice, training and research in therapeutic and psycho-educational approaches to supporting couples.
2. The project is an approach to safeguarding children, which uses Tavistock Relationships' innovative and unique MBT (Mentalization-Based Therapy) and Harrow Council's frontline social workers working directly with parents in order to improve children's outcomes.
3. Situational couple violence differs from controlling coercive violence/intimate partner terrorism in that it is not characterised by an overall pattern of control of the woman by the man, but tends to be occasional and reactive, and to some degree mutual. In families where there are concerns about children there is an urgent need to tackle violence between the parents in order to improve the couple relationship so that violence is less likely to occur in the future, and hence improve outcomes for their children.
4. Tavistock Relationships are being funded to deliver an evaluated mentalization-based intervention by two qualified clinicians for up to 30 parental couples to improve relationships. The 12-15+ session model is built of a 3 session assessment with 6 sessions of therapy plus three to six top-up sessions as appropriate. This builds on and extends the previous domestic violence pilot intervention undertaken with Harrow Social Care.
5. The training that is being funded is for up to 90 front-line practitioners to increase knowledge and understanding of the parental couple, the impact of conflict and abuse on children and the role of drug and alcohol abuse on family relationships, and to increase effective practice by learning new ways of intervening in family situations where violence and abuse leads to heightened child/vulnerable adult safeguarding concerns. In addition, we will be providing an advanced training up to eight qualified clinicians in the delivery of a mentalization-based treatment intervention for parents and couples where violence and abuse dominates family life. This ensures sustainability of the model into the future, embedding changed practice in Harrow's service response to these challenging families.