

# A guide to... Relational and Restorative practice in Newcastle



Children, Education and Skills Directorate

This guide describes our approach to working with babies, children and their families. It has been written for everyone that works with children and families in Newcastle, including our partners in schools and education, health, the police, the council, local business and the third sector.

"Singularly the most useful and interesting day out of school that I have had in my whole career."

*Head teacher comment on Relational and Restorative Practice training*

## What is relational and restorative practice?

Relational and restorative practice is a way of working with babies, children and their families.

It is about **strengthening our relationships with families**, and **empowering them to find their own solutions in their lives**. It recognises that successful outcomes rely on respectful, healthy relationships.

Relational and restorative practice is a '**way of being**' based on values and behaviours that prioritise relationships.

Where children are at risk, we continue to take swift and decisive action to protect them.

"I have seen a huge positive change in mam, she seems happy and knows people are there to help."

*Child*



# Relational and restorative practice... is a bridge between families and services in Newcastle



## Our Vision

Newcastle is a great place to grow up where every child and young person is safe and loved, healthy and happy, and free from harm and has the chance to make the most of their talents to fulfil their potential.

## We want all children to...

- Be safe and feel safe
- Be happy and feel included
- Be healthy and well cared for
- Be ready for the world of work
- Be heard in decisions about their lives and their city

### We put families first

**We believe that children do better with their families, and that families have the strength to be in control of their lives.** We are committed to exploring every opportunity for the child to be supported within their network.

### We practice and promote family-led decision making

**We trust and empower families, and support them to 'own' the plan for their child.** Family Networks and Family Group Conferencing are used to help families find ways for children to safely remain at home wherever possible.

### We value our colleagues

**We promote a culture that prioritises relationships.** The way we relate to colleagues mirrors the approach to working with families, with a focus on empathy, respect and appreciating that everyone has something to contribute.

### We invest in our relationships with partners

**We work closely with our partners** including through Children and Families Newcastle, Newcastle Promise Board with schools, and the Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership.

### We use positive language to communicate

**We are conscious to use language that is positive, inclusive and helps us build relationships.** We avoid impersonal and technical language when talking to families.

### We listen to the voice of the child

**We seek children and young people's views on decisions that affect them.** Our 'Evry' Programme gives children a say in how their city runs and lets them shape activities and services.



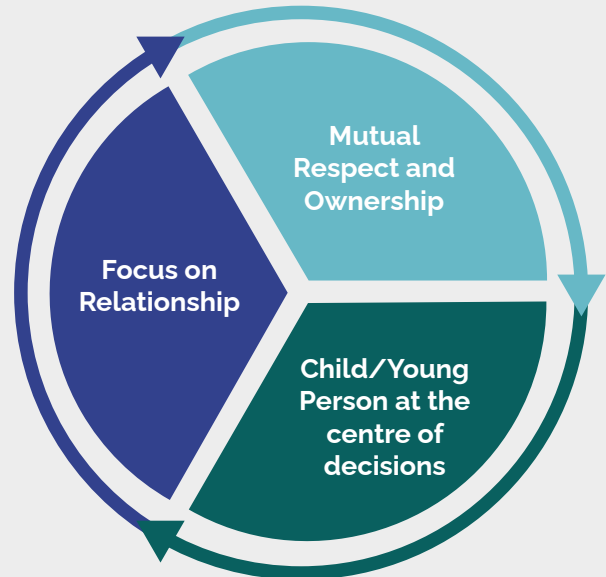
# It's all about relationships!

## Relationships at the centre of services

Relational and restorative practice puts **human relationships** at the centre of services.

It promotes relationships with babies, children and their families, colleagues and partners as the key to successful outcomes. It is a deliberate move away from relying on process and targets to drive outcomes.

For services to be relational, families must feel involved and respected, play a role in their development, and have strong, trusting relationships with professionals.



## The Four Ways of Being

We believe that by working **with** families we can help support them to make positive change.

We give **high support** (listening, encouraging and helping) and **high challenge** (setting limits and boundaries) to families.

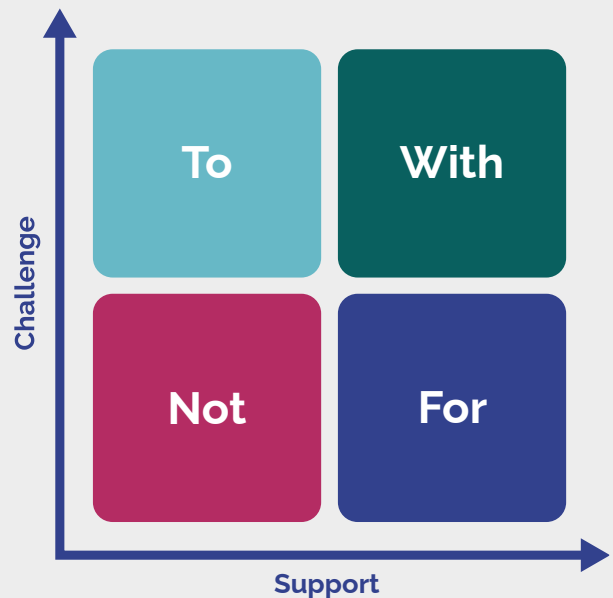
The four ways of being are:

High Challenge-Low Support = Punitive/authoritarian = **Doing things TO people**

High Support-High Challenge = Restorative/Relational = **Doing things WITH people**

Low Challenge-Low Support = Neglectful/not interpreted = **NOT doing much of anything**

High Support-Low Challenge = Permissive/make excuses = **Doing things FOR people**



*Adapted from: Wachtel, T. & McCold, P. in Strang, H. & Braithwaite, J. (eds), (2001), Restorative Justice and Civil Society, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge*

**For more information on relational and restorative practice and training opportunities visit the [Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership website.](#)**



**Newcastle**  
City Council  
Children, Education and Skills Directorate