Implementing Contact Activities - Separated Parent Information Programmes and Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programmes - learning so far.

Mike Coote – National Commissioning and Partnerships Manager
History

• Development of out of court services for separating parents.
• Making Contact Work 2001
  – Application to court as last resort
  – Improved contact services
  – Family Assistance Orders
  – Educational programmes
  – Ordered Mediation (information meetings)
  – Enforcement
History

• Family Resolution Pilot Project 04-05
• 2007 – Longer term outcomes of conciliation
  – Conciliated agreements tend not to resolve the underlying issues
  – Parties tend to leave the court system because they have run out of energy or money, not because they have a resolution of the issues
  – Time does tend to heal the hurt of adults but much less so that of children
Delivery

• Children and Adoption Act 2006

  • Contact Activity - implemented 12-08
    • Separated Parents Information Programme
    • Mediation Information and Assessment Meetings
    • Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programmes
Delivery

• Children and Adoption Act 2006
  • Enforcement of contact orders
  • Risk Assessment
  • Extended Family Assistance Orders
Delivery

- Children and Adoption Act 2006
  - Enforcement of contact orders
  - Risk Assessment
  - Extended Family Assistance Orders
Delivery

• **Shared responsibility**
• Managed by Cafcass for the DfE – creation of Commissioning and Partnerships function – 9 staff
• **Training programmes** delivered Autumn 2008 (Cafcass and JSB)
• Processes in place
• **Voluntary Sector Providers**
• Service User funded with hardship funding – up to April 2010, then **free**
Contact Services

• As at March 2011 there were 338 accredited Contact centres.
• 57 contact centres offering supported and supervised child contact
• 26 contact centres offering supervised child contact – 1824 Cafcass funded referrals 10-11
• 255 contact centres offering supported child contact – 197 part funded by Cafcass 2010-11
SPIP

• SPIP delivered by **58 organisations at 197 locations**
  – 25 Mediation Services
  – 23 Contact and Relationship services
  – 10 other – 5 National

• DVPP delivered by **17 organisations**
PIP cases as a proportion of applications 2009-10

Safe and Beneficial contact cases

- 945
- 28120
- 59033
PIP cases as a proportion of applications projected 2010-11

Safe and Beneficial contact cases

- 13178
- 16178
- 58722
DVPP

- DVPP Numbers since Dec 08:
  - Assessment 79
  - Part complete 28
  - Ongoing 49
  - Complete 19

- Total 175
DVPP

• Respect accreditation or NOMS – Probation Trust services
• 30 week programmes
• Individual and group work
• Women’s support service
• **Assessment and reporting back to Cafcass**
• Contact issues through Cafcass, in line with the Judicial protocol
DVPP

• Referrals and contact not yet well managed in all cases
  – Limited use of supervised contact
  – Limited case management
  – Limited view of realistic outcome
  – Shared approach lacking

• Too soon to draw conclusions
• Briefings for Service Managers and DVPP Providers currently underway
PIP Basics

• Parents attend separately
• **Service Users choose** provider – Listings are on [www.cafcass.gov.uk](http://www.cafcass.gov.uk)
Separated Parents Information Programme (Contact Activity)

The programme is designed to help parents learn more about the challenges of post-separation parenting, including the effects on children of ongoing conflict. It also aims to provide advice and support about how best to help children in this situation, and seeks to enable parents to take steps towards their own solutions. Most parents that go on the course say they find it very helpful.

The Separated Parents Information Programme (PIP)
- It is usually delivered to mixed groups of applicants (parents applying for contact with their children) and respondents (parents responding to an application for contact) in ten two-hour sessions or one four-hour session. You must be there for the whole course.
- Separated couples do not go on the same course, but it is important that both parents go on a course.
- Parent communication – we will ask you to discuss a prepared scenario and to look at it from the viewpoint of the mother, father and children.
- Emotions – finally you will look at the emotional effect divorce and separation can have and the options for moving forward.

Feedback
The provider only reports back to Cafcass about attendance and does not assess your responses to the various parts of the programme. Some providers also seek feedback through an evaluation form.

To take part in a course:
Courts have the power by making a court order to ‘direct’ parents to go to contact activities that are aimed at promoting safe contact with children. You can be ordered to go to a parenting information programme and/or to a mediation information meeting. Cafcass is usually asked to advise the court if it is suitable for you.

There is now no charge to Cafcass service users for the Separated Parents Information Programme.
PIP Basics

• **Court must order**, and inform chosen provider
• Four hours of group work-usually 2 x 2 hours
Parenting Course
Session 1a

• Main themes: introduction to course, rapport building and ground rules
• Content: the divorce or separation process
• Exercise “The Separation or Divorce Journey”
• Engagement and empathy
Main themes: focusing on children and parents’ strengths.

DVD “When Parents Part”

Discussion on what children need, what they don’t need and talking to children

Exercise “The Parenting Questionnaire”.

What children need
Parenting Course
Session 2a

• Main themes: parent communication
• Re-visiting the parenting questionnaire and identifying a positive change
• Exercise “Scenarios”
• Content and discussion on having difficult conversations, having “a business like relationship” and tips for contact
• Seeing the other side and communication
Parenting Course
Session 2b

- Main themes: emotional aspects of divorce and separation and moving forward
- Content and discussion on the stages of loss and taking care of yourself
- Exercise “The Support Network”
- Content and discussion on moving forward, counselling and mediation
- Exercise revisiting “The Separation or Divorce Journey” and ending
- Support and next steps
Separated Parents Information Programme
How can PIP make a difference?

• How can we keep the light bulb on?

• Good foundations in place

• How can we capitalise on an intervention with positive features?
Building bridges? An evaluation of the costs and effectiveness of the Separated Parents Information Programme (PIP)

Liz Trinder, Caroline Bryson, Lester Coleman, Catherine Houliston, Susan Purdon, Janet Reibstein and Leanne Smith
Liz Trinder and team 2011 research

Aims
1. Understand the court and non-court pathways undertaken by parents attending PIP, and how this compares to the experiences of comparable non-PIP cases.
2. Measure the average cost of providing PIP and the cost-effectiveness of PIPs in comparison with other court-based pathways.
3. Measure the impact on families of PIPs compared to other court-based pathways.
4. Understand in more depth why PIP might work better in some circumstances than others, including what parents and professionals perceive to be helpful and unhelpful about PIPs and what changes may be required.
Research design

- A telephone survey of PIP parents and non-PIP parents to provide data on pathways, impacts, costs and processes.
- Purposively-sampled qualitative telephone interviews with parents reporting positive and negative outcomes from PIP.
- Four focus groups with parents shortly after completing the final session of PIP.
- Focus groups and individual interviews with judges, family lawyers, CAFCASS staff and PIP deliverers.
- A survey of the average unit costs of delivering a single PIP cycle based on a specially-designed tool.
What are we learning?

- PIP numbers are up, but referral rates vary widely
- Criteria for suitability and appropriateness are not consistently applied
- Cases involving risk are being referred
- PIP cases are more likely to have a review (rather than hearing) but are longer in court
- PIP is being used as ‘additional’ not ‘instead’
- Mediation take up is low
What are we learning? Quantitative data

- PIP has a positive effect on contact
- No firm evidence of an effect on quality of relationship / communication
- PIP increases probability of future, out of court, negotiation
- Earlier use is better, but there can be an effect for later cases too
What are we learning? Transferring to PIP

• Referral process are varied ‘slow inefficient and unreliable’
• Parents are poorly briefed before PIP
What are we learning? The Course

• Participants positive, even where outcomes not positive
• Increases understanding of other’s perspectives
• Format and content is valued
• Material may not be relevant to diverse families, and may not address skills development
What are we learning? Follow through

- Cases go back to court
- Not to Mediation, or to direct communication
- Limited evidence that Court processes explicitly build on the work achieved in PIP
Recommendations

• Earlier PIP, and linked more clearly to MIAM or dispute resolution
• Better screening and selection – faster referral
• Better preparation and setting of expectations
• Reviewed programme content
• Post PIP follow up – picking up on the changed language and new understandings
New Models

- **PIP Plus** – a post PIP intervention by providers; a joint meeting and discussion of parenting plan and dispute resolution – expectations clear at order stage
- **PIP and MIAM** – expectations clear at order stage
- **Developing PIP** for diverse groups – extending provision of other groups to meet other needs - DVPP
Programme improvement

• **Programme review** to ensure emphasis on skill development – focus on post-separation parenting challenges

• Work on **referral processes** – quick and clear

• **Seminars** with all Cafcass early intervention team managers (June / July), leading to input to FJCs
  – Screening
  – Preparation and expectations
  – Referral speed
  – Follow up - diversion
Successful Foundations

• Compelled attendance
• Use of partner organisations to deliver the programme
• Mixed groups – applicant/respondent/gender
• DVD, exercises and handbook
• Enthusiastic and capable facilitators
• Expectations
• Follow up
Summary

• PIP appears to resonate with many parents, has found a significant place in the FJS, but has a modest impact.

• ‘The most effective programmes take time and several iterations to develop... Full potential has probably not yet been realised’
Building bridges? An evaluation of the costs and effectiveness of the Separated Parents Information Programme (PIP)

https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/
Progress

• Well placed in the Family Justice Review
• We are aware that this has not always been an easy journey for providers or referrers – it is a work in progress
• The multi-agency aspects are now much more clear
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