

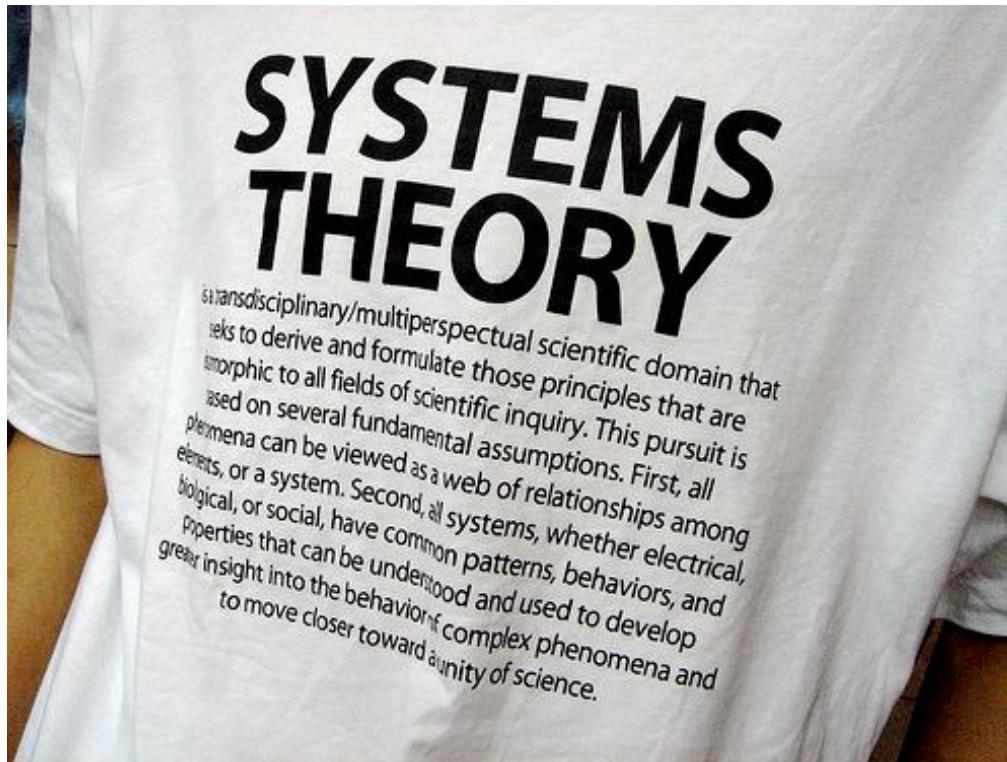
The Munro Review of Child Protection



Part Two: The Child's Journey, February 2011

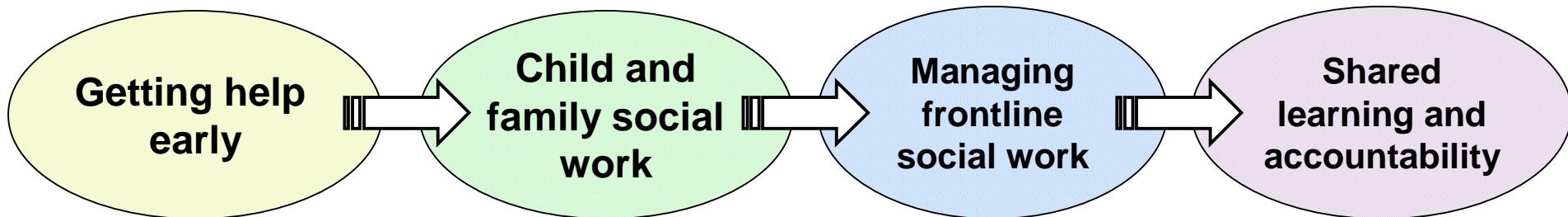
The story so far.....

- review part of drive to improve the quality of child protection in England. Commissioned June 2010
- October 2010 First report: Analysis of unintended consequences of previous reforms
- February 2011: Interim report: Characteristics of an effective child protection system
- April 2011: Final report: Recommendations for reform



A system.....

- ❑ seen through the journey a child makes: needing protection to being protected
- ❑ that learns and adapts, notices problems and innovates, characterised by competent professional judgment informing action when the work is too varied for rules
- ❑ that knows there will be errors and so tries to catch them quickly, and knows that the quest for certainty creates more danger for families and professionals



A multi-agency, multi-professional system

- shared responsibilities
 - inspection
 - learning through serious case reviews (SCRs)
 - multi – disciplinary guidance – '*Working Together*'
 - Local Safeguarding Children Boards
 - Performance Data
- early help (intervention) and support for families – the role of universal services
 - Identifying maltreatment
 - Designated health safeguarding leads
- working with abusive families

Uncertainty: the chronic dilemma

- uncertain signs of problems require professional judgment about when to investigate further
- the lower the threshold for escalating:
 - the more families will be investigated
 - some increase in identified cases
 - bigger increase in families considered not to need a service
 - reduction in resources for other parts of service
 - alienation of families

Early help and support – the role of universal services?

2009-10

- 65% of total number of children referred (603,700) to children's social care received an initial assessment – cost?
- 23% of total number referred went on to have a core assessment – cost? Outcome for the 42% not getting to this stage?
- small number (39,100) have a child protection plan
- 377,600 children in need at 31 March 2010
- unmet need, targeted early support for families through universal services must be important to reduce numbers of children who may go on to be harmed?

Can we make the judgment more accurate?

- in a local area, is the extent of need known?
- number of high risk violent families, number of parents using drug and/or alcohol treatment programmes, number of parents with mental health difficulties
- improving integrated working and giving early support through professionals having a local policy and system to record their understanding about families - common assessment
- role of designated leads
- easy availability of social work advice can inform decisions about what to do next
- evidence of multi agency teams in communities is encouraging

'Working Together'.....

- guidance has grown from 7 to 390 pages
- need rules so can predict what each other will do
- need principles of good practice to distil wisdom
- **BUT** should professional guidance be left to professions?

Inspection

- need better measures of quality
- more attention to outcomes for children
- more attention to professional practice
- more encouragement to learn than to comply
- supporting improvement by identifying good practice

Recommendations and areas for further consideration

- deeper, wider unannounced inspection, announced inspection phased out
- Ofsted evaluation of serious case reviews stops

Considering:

- '*Working Together*', clear principles separated out from professional guidance
- strengthened role for Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs)
- national body of trained reviewers for serious child care incidents and wider system learning
- assessment as a continuous story across early support to statutory child protection intervention

Implementation and next steps (1)

- working to embed a professional focus on children and their experiences of child protection
- feedback and creating the implementation footprint
- discussion about a national safeguarding panel, composed of professions within child protection system, to advise on whether components of the system are interacting and problems are emerging
- feedback from areas trialling locally determined practice to assess families and children
- deep thinking about skills and interfaces between health visitors, social workers and child protection

Implementation and next steps (2)

- role for emerging GP consortia in child protection
- further work to support midwives, school nurses and other health professionals
- protecting the role of the designated health leads for safeguarding
- resourcing multi –agency teams in the community to develop early support and help
- developing the role for LSCBs in multi– agency training, learning and monitoring impact of professional practice on children, young people, their families and carers
- insisting that child protection is a priority amidst the extent of public sector reform