

one**plus**one

Reducing parental conflict in Wales

Evaluation of the digital package rollout

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Ariennir gan
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The simple toolkit of resources complements our existing work with families, either as an online tool to signpost parents to access by themselves, or for us to work through together. Relationship issues come up in so many different areas of our work and it's useful to have information to hand that we can use to help families whenever they need it.

Practitioner 1

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background and introduction

OnePlusOne was commissioned by the Welsh government to support local authorities to roll out a suite of evidence-based training and digital resources to their local communities through early intervention and prevention services. Through the *Reducing parental conflict in Wales (RPC in Wales)* programme 41 practitioners from 21 local authorities in Wales were trained using a Train the Trainer model and tasked with equipping practitioners in their local authorities to share the digital resources with families. The digital package comprised three resources designed to support healthy relationships, develop conflict resolution and communication skills, and improve relational capability. Each resource targeted parents at different transitional stages. *Me, You and Baby Too* was directed at parents in the transition to parenthood, *Arguing better* at parents who were experiencing stress and conflict, and *Getting it right for children* was for separated or separating parents. Each local authority was free to roll out the training to practitioners and the digital package to parents as they wished.

Evaluation approach

The aim of the evaluation was to:

1. Assess the impact of the three digital interventions on relationship quality outcomes specific to each digital resource.
2. Explore how local authorities chose to roll out the resources and identify the most effective approach to embedding them into their services.

The evaluation adopted a mixed method design, consisting of quantitative and qualitative approaches including interviews with parents and action learning sets with

practitioners. This report brings together the findings of the evaluation and complements the quarterly reporting snapshots that were provided over the course of the programme.

Key findings

Analysis of pre- and post-resource surveys found statistically significant improvements for parents on a number of relationship outcomes across all three resources, such as couple coping and co-parenting co-operation. Measures of reach and engagement show that fewer parents used the resources than anticipated, but that those who did progressed through them well and spent a significant amount of time using them. Lower uptake is likely to reflect delays in rolling out the resources. Few local authorities started training before the autumn, and many felt they were just beginning to get the resource out there as the pilot year ended.

Independent of each other, local authorities used four training delivery models to equip practitioners to use the resources with parents. These ranged from full training – replicating the Train the Trainer course with practitioners – through to briefly introducing practitioners to the resources and encouraging them to use them with parents. The majority of local authorities provided their practitioners with an adapted version of the training, condensing it and targeting it to the skills and needs of practitioners from different services or with different levels of experience. A combination of practitioners from generic, early intervention and prevention, and statutory services were trained with variations across each local authority.

Local authorities used a combination of four delivery models for the digital resource, from raising awareness (eg using social

media) and signposting through generic services, through to supporting parents on a one-to-one basis to engage with a resource. We do not have the quantitative data to determine which of these approaches worked best, but feedback from practitioners and parents highlights the value of being able to roll out and use the resources flexibly in a way that best suits the practitioners and parents. Parents and practitioners alike were extremely positive about the resources which they felt were accessible, relatable, and easy to use, offering the opportunity to explore skills and topics that are not available through other resources.

The resources were successful in improving parents' understanding of conflict and their own communication patterns. Interviews with parents highlighted new insights around the impact of conflict and arguing on children, how to communicate effectively with their partner or ex-partner, how to prevent conflict from escalating, and sources and impact of stress. Some parents also described putting these insights into practice, with resulting improvements in, for example, how they communicated with their partner or ex-partner, along with fewer arguments and less conflict, strengthened relationships, and improved outcomes for children. This is encouraging evidence that the resources are meeting parents' needs and supporting improvements in areas important to them.

In monthly catchups and quarterly learning sets, practitioners indicated that the resources fitted into their existing provision well and offered options for supporting parents that they did not currently have, particularly when it came to separated parents parenting together. Although practitioners spoke about challenges in rolling out the resources, such as digital access, practitioner engagement, and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the flexible nature of the resources allowed them to adapt and use the different delivery

models to reach a broad spectrum of parents. This included distributing the resources to parents universally, such as through schools and Family Advice and Information Services; signposting parents to the resources while on waitlists for other programmes; using *Me, You and Baby Too* as an addition to perinatal classes; and using the resources as a full intervention alongside practitioner support in statutory settings.

Recommendations and next steps

While there is much more to learn about the nature and extent of the use and impact of the resources by and on parents, we know enough to suggest that continuing to roll out the programme provides a valuable return on investment. The programme can reach a range of families, such as parents of school-age children who may not usually come under the care of the local authority teams, and fill a gap in the toolkit of resources available to practitioners working with families.

When considering taking *RPC in Wales* forward, we present eight key areas to consider:

- i. Equipping practitioners to use the resources.** Tiered training approaches, potentially including an online practitioner course hosted on a practitioner-only platform.
- ii. Supporting system and culture change to embed the resources into normal practice.** This could include, for example, putting the resources on parent monitoring forms, building practitioner confidence in initiating conversations about the couple relationship with parents, and normalising it as part of their practice.
- iii. Developing evidence-based guidance on digital delivery for practitioners.** This would involve creating and testing a delivery pathway for practitioners that outlines basic approaches to working with parents using digital resources.

Such a pathway would build in the challenges and opportunities presented by a digital delivery model.

iv. Integrating the resources with other programmes and initiatives. For example, including links to the resources on the 'Parenting. Give it time' website, raising awareness of them through the anti-smacking campaign, and signposting to the resources through other programmes, such as GroBrain or Solihull.

v. Creating a national identity and infrastructure. A nationwide marketing campaign through social media including training in the Children in Wales webinars, putting the resource on the 'A' list of programmes.

vi. Increasing marketing and awareness raising efforts. A centralised approach, focusing on reaching parents where they are (on social media, in schools, in parent groups). Active marketing, particularly through social media, has been highly successful on other projects designed to engage parents in digital support.

vii. Sharing good practice across local authorities through regular action learning sets. Opportunities to share learning across leads has been highly beneficial and leads are keen to continue to learn from one another. Action learning sets for practitioners within local authorities have also been successfully used to share successes and troubleshoot challenges at a local level.

viii. Refining the functionality of the resources. This could include adding an introductory session that practitioners can share with parents to give them a flavour of the resource or creating a separate platform for practitioners where they can refresh their knowledge or download resources.

We have offered a range of recommendations for further embedding the resource into the local service offer. These strike a balance between continuing to foster the local autonomy that has enabled local authorities (and parents within them) to make the most of the flexibility that the resources offer, and providing Wales-wide centralised support. As well as the ongoing delivery of the digital resources with the suggested recommendations in place, further evaluation of the delivery models developed by local authorities during this year's rollout would provide invaluable insight into what approaches work best in supporting parents in conflict to use these flexible digital resources. These insights could inform and strengthen the ongoing rollout to continue to increase the impact and reach of the digital resources and see meaningful improvements in the wellbeing of families in Wales.

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Since completing the course I am a lot calmer when asking for help and both me and my partner can tell each other how we are feeling without it leading to an argument. I recommend that all parents with a new baby complete this course.

Parent 1

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

This report sets out the findings of an evaluation into the yearlong *Reducing parental conflict in Wales (RPC in Wales)* programme. The programme was commissioned as part of a £12.5m package of measures the Welsh government put in place to address the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on vulnerable children, young people, and families. Recognising the risks of poorer long-term outcomes for children exposed to frequent, intense, and poorly resolved parental conflict (eg, Harold et al., 2016; Reynolds, 2014) the Welsh government allocated £800,000 of its Covid-19 reconstruction fund to supporting families experiencing conflict and stress.

Through this funding, OnePlusOne was commissioned to train frontline practitioners across the 22 local authorities in Wales and roll out a digital resource package to support parents in managing conflict and stress in their relationships. The rollout was designed to provide practitioners with a toolkit of evidence-based resources that would complement the services already offered to parents and meet the needs of parents in conflict across the spectrum, whether intact or separated.

Report outline

Section 2 of this report discusses the development and delivery of the *RPC in Wales* programme, Section 3 describes the approach adopted to evaluate its impact, and Section 4 reports on the findings of the evaluation. The report concludes in Section 5 with a discussion of essential learning and recommendations for next steps.

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...fantastic training and their 'Train The Trainer' sessions have been worth their weight in gold to enable us to cascade knowledge and much needed resources to staff across all our services, including family support workers, teaching assistants and health workers.

Practitioner 2

DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF THE *REDUCING PARENTAL CONFLICT IN WALES* PROGRAMME

OnePlusOne has developed a suite of evidence-based training and digital resources to support couples, families, and communities to strengthen their relationships and realise positive outcomes for children. This section sets out how its training and resources were tailored to the *RPC in Wales* programme.

Practitioner training

Training for practitioners was modelled on a Train the Trainer (TTT) approach and designed to enable practitioners to train other practitioners in their local authority to work with the programme. Each local authority was invited to nominate two lead practitioners to attend from early help, early intervention, and prevention teams (eg, Flying Start, Team Around the Family). These practitioners would then act as facilitators, taking the lead on rolling out the resource in their local areas.

Thirty-nine professionals from 21 local authorities in Wales attended the facilitator training between April 2021 and March 2022. This was delivered online by OnePlusOne's trainers across three two-day sessions. The first day addressed the impact of parental conflict on children and offered an introduction to the digital resources, including their evidence base. The second day offered an opportunity for practitioners to explore the digital resources and develop skills for using them while working with parents.

The aim of the training was to equip practitioners with the confidence and knowledge to support parents and others in the parenting role (whether married, cohabiting, in civil partnerships, in a

relationship and not living together, or separated) to develop more constructive conflict behaviours. Through the training, practitioners learned how to:

- Raise parents' awareness of the issue of parental conflict.
- Use the resources to help parents recognise destructive conflict and behaviour patterns.
- Enable parents to develop positive communication skills and helpful conflict behaviours.

Each facilitator received a guide to use in the subsequent training of practitioners in their local authority. Practitioners also received a guide to support them in using the resources with parents. Apart from these centralised documents, each local authority determined how to roll out training to practitioners in their area and how to embed the package into their service offer. The different approaches that local authorities took are described in the findings section.

Digital resource package

The digital resource package was accessible to each local authority through a unique link. The resources, summarised in Table 1, consisted of three digital interventions targeting parents at different transitional stages of their relationships (see Appendix A for outcome measures and Appendix B for evidence base summary table). Local authorities were also provided with a two-page flyer in English and Welsh for parents and practitioners, which described the three resources and provided a centralised link where they could find their local authority's unique URL (Appendix C).

Due to Covid restrictions and social distancing laws, practitioners were not able to roll the digital package out as they may have if they were working with parents

face-to-face, in group settings, or in a more focused fashion. This is reflected in the use of signposting and remote one-to-one sessions discussed in the findings section.

TABLE 1 Resources in the digital package

	Arguing better	Me, You and Baby Too	Getting it right for children
Target audience	Parents of children aged 0-19 who are experiencing conflict in their relationship.	Couples in the transition to parenthood (first 1,001 days).	Separated couples who are co-parenting.
Goal	To support parents to develop conflict resolution and communication skills, and to increase their capacity to cope with stress together.	To support parents in the transition to parenthood through raised awareness of the impact of stress and conflict, and development of conflict and communication skills.	To help separating and separated parents stop putting their children in the middle, through raised awareness, managed conflict, and improved communication.
Outcomes	Perceived stress Dyadic coping	Couple satisfaction Dyadic coping Couple conflict	Emotional readiness Co-parenting conflict

Evaluation approach

In addition to the programme, the Welsh government commissioned a full evaluation of its rollout during 2021-22 across all 22 local authorities in Wales. The aim of the evaluation was to:

- Assess the impact of the three digital interventions on relationship quality outcomes specific to each digital resource.
- Explore how local authorities rolled out the resources and identify the most effective approaches to embedding the resources.

We developed a theory of change and plan for the evaluation of the digital package (Appendices D and E respectively) and adopted a mixed method approach, comprising both quantitative and

qualitative data collection to evaluate these research aims.

Analytics

Analytics data were collected to monitor usage and engagement with the three digital interventions across all 22 local authorities and at a Wales-wide level. Using Google Analytics, MixPanel, Thinkific's user databases, and active event listeners on the resources pages, we collected data on the following measures:

- How many users went on to start a resource after registering.
- How far users progressed through a resource.
- How long users spent on a resource.
- How many times users returned up to a month after starting.

Outcome data

We collected demographic information and relationship outcome measures (Appendix A) specific to the aims of each resource through questionnaires completed before and after use of the resource (Table 1).

We contacted parents who had completed pre- and post-resource questionnaires and asked them to complete follow-up surveys to evaluate whether there was any lasting change from using the resources.

Parent interviews

Throughout the yearlong evaluation we emailed parents who had used at least one of the digital resources and invited them to take part in semi-structured telephone interviews (see Appendix F for topic guides and Appendix G for consent forms). In these interviews we aimed to better understand how parents came across the resources, how they used them, what they learnt from them, and any impact of using them.

Monthly meetings with LA leads

Each month the lead researcher at OnePlusOne met with a designated practitioner from each local authority for a one-to-one discussion about their progress and approach to rolling out the training and resources in their area. This allowed us to explore the different ways that each local authority had rolled the digital package out, and also fostered a supportive relationship between OnePlusOne and each local authority.

Regional practitioner learning sets

Each quarter we ran regional learning sets with practitioners from different local authorities over Teams. These were designed to explore the challenges involved in rolling the resources out and how they may have overcome these, and to facilitate peer support and learning across local authorities.

ESSENTIAL FINDINGS OF THE EVALUATION

During the evaluation year, we submitted quarterly updates comprising summaries of the qualitative and quantitative data collected during the preceding three months. These offered a snapshot of how local authorities were progressing in their rollouts. The current report synthesises and complements that data, attempting to capture how the programme was rolled out and understand which approaches were most effective and why.

What was achieved?

This section explores the quantitative data collected across the evaluation period, with collection for analytics and pre- and post-resource questionnaires running from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

Strengthening relationships and outcomes for children

As Table 3 illustrates, parents' scores improved on each of the relational measures following use of the three resources. This included statistically significant improvements in couple coping (*Arguing better*), emotional readiness and co-parenting (*Getting it right for children*), and reductions in relationship conflict (*Me, You and Baby Too*). Taken together the results show that parents saw improvements in aspects of their communication, co-operation, and emotional adaptation regardless of which resource they used. Due to the small sample sizes, we were not able to establish whether outcomes varied by local authority, demographic background, or how parents accessed the resource.

TABLE 3 Relationship outcome measures for digital package resources

Variable	Arguing better n=25		Me, You and Baby Too n=16		Getting it right for children n=38	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Relationship satisfaction			4.61	4.81		
Couple coping	2.69	3.64*	3.62	3.80		
Relationship conflict			3.00	2.46*		
Stress	3.04	2.66+				
Co-parenting co-operation					2.98	3.22*
Emotional readiness					6.15	6.72**

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .001$ +approaching significance ($p = .055$)

How many parents used the resources?

Table 4 summarises measures of reach and engagement for each resource. It shows that 986 users registered for the digital package across Wales. Of these, 38% were parents and 62% were practitioners. Around a third of registered users went on

to start one of the resources. This resulted in 336 sessions for parents, averaging 30 minutes per session and 821 sessions for practitioners, averaging 29 minutes per session. These metrics can be better understood in the context of feedback from practitioners about the rollout of the digital package. For example, we know

from our monthly follow-up sessions that practitioners would often use their own accounts to facilitate sessions with parents, which may go some way to explaining why there are significantly more practitioner sessions than parent sessions.

TABLE 4 Reach and engagement metrics for parent users of the digital resources

	Arguing better	Me, You and Baby Too	Getting it right for children
Registered users (parents) who started the resource	125	64	150
Progression through resource	67%	71%	67%
Average time range per session (mins)	26-70	30-108	23-60
Total number of sessions	130	77	129
User who returned within a month (%)	7.5%	4.6%	8.6%
Total hours spent using the resource	110	96	40

Data from completed questionnaires (Table 5) show that the majority of users across all three resources were female, in their mid to late 30s, and low- to middle-income earners. Users of *Me, You and Baby Too* and *Arguing better* were more likely to be in a relationship, while all of those using *Getting it right for children* were either separated,

in the process of separating, or thinking of separating. Average time of separation for those using *Getting it right for children* was one and a half years, but some users had been separated up to seventeen years. The most common separation time was just six months.

TABLE 5 Demographics for users who completed questionnaires

		Arguing better	Me, You and Baby Too	Getting it right for children
Relationship status	In a relationship and living together	13	4	0
	In a relationship and not living together	15	6	0
	Married or civil partnership	13	11	0
	Separated or divorced	6	3	28
	In the process of separating	0	0	5
	Thinking of separating	0	0	4
	Other	9	4	23
How long separated for?	Range	N/A	N/A	1 month - 17 years
	Mean	N/A	N/A	1.5 years
Gender	Male	12	5	13
	Female	50	24	49
	Transgender	1	0	0
	Not disclosed	0	0	1
Age	Range	21-60	20-43	20-57
	Mean (SD)	36.58(8.36)	31.46(6.85)	37.13(7.99)
Income	£0 - £16,000	9	7	17
	£16,001 - £30,000	17	3	16
	£30,001 - £60,000	18	10	12
	£60,001 - £90,000	7	3	1
	£90,001+	1	0	0
	N/A	7	4	16
Number of children	Range	1-4	1-4	0-8
	Mode	1	1	2
Pregnant	Yes	N/A	8	N/A
	Partner pregnant	N/A	3	N/A
	Child already born	N/A	17	N/A
No of weeks pregnant	Range	N/A	28-38	N/A
	Mean	N/A	28	N/A

Around a third of users who completed pre-resource questionnaires also completed post-resource questionnaires (Table 6). While some attrition is to be expected, this figure is not reflective of users' progress through the resource, but simply of whether they answered the questions at the end.

Feedback from practitioners and parents suggests some possible reasons for this, such as practitioners using the resources with parents and skipping the final questions, or users choosing not to engage with the questions, thinking they were repetitive from the pre-test.

TABLE 6 Reach and engagement metrics for parent users of the digital resources

	Arguing better	Me, You and Baby Too	Getting it right for children
Pre only	57	36	54
Post only	13	23	20
Pre and post (matched pairs)	25	16	38

Users' experiences of the digital resources

Findings from the interviews with 17 parents who had used at least one of the resources in the digital package (see Appendix H for demographics) provide insight into users' experiences of working through the resources, what they learnt from them, and what difference the resources made.

Motivation

Unsurprisingly, the reasons parents used the resources varied according to which resource they engaged with. Users of *Getting it right for children* were motivated to ensure that the conflict they were experiencing with their ex-partner did not negatively affect their child. They wanted to learn how to work better with their ex-partner, manage difficult handovers, handle partner aggression more effectively, and take responsibility for the way their own behaviours affected their children.

"It's more thinking about the kids. They don't want to see arguments, with their parents arguing... I've just got to think about them in that situation first."

Users of *Arguing better* were motivated by the desire to improve communication with their partners. Many of the parents we spoke to did not feel they were in a high conflict situation, but that learning how to communicate was generally important, particularly when stressed. For users of *Me, You and Baby Too*, there was a recognition that a new baby would bring change and possibly stress into the relationship, and that it was an opportunity to be *"prepared for how we could communicate better and deal with stress."*

The different reasons for engaging with the resources indicate how important it is to have resources available that target different life and relationship stages.

What was helpful

Feedback from the parents was overwhelmingly positive. When probed to explore what they did not enjoy or what they thought the resources lacked, none of the parents felt that the resources were missing anything. Parents felt that the resources were relatable to their experiences and were *'simple to use, with simple messages.'* This was particularly helpful for parents who struggled with resources that were text heavy and used complex language. Parents

found the videos particularly useful for explaining complex topics in simple ways and in *'modelling what parents are actually going through.'* Seeing the situations and skills modelled out and putting the focus on children were considered particularly impactful aspects of the videos.

"It makes you pay attention, putting kids at the centre of it."

The accessibility of the content and the digital nature of the resources were considered key strengths. These aspects allowed parents to *'do bits as and when' or 'pick up where they left off without having 'to do it all in one go'.* This flexibility and accessibility also allowed parents to *'pick and choose the bits that [they're] particularly interested in,'* increasing their motivation to engage.

Finally, parents felt that the content provided an opportunity to explore skills and topics that are not available through other resources. For example, one mum who had used *Me, You and Baby Too* felt that it was *"the first of its kind that I've accessed... everything else has been about the individual and Me, You and Baby Too was about the relationship."*

Practitioners were equally appreciative of having a range of resources at their disposal which gave them the opportunity to share bite-size chunks with parents, and to tailor support to specific needs.

What parents learned

What parents learned from the resources falls into five areas, mirroring their reasons for using the resources in the first place.

The impact of conflict and arguing on children

All of the parents who used *Getting it right for children* said it had opened their eyes

to the way conflict with their ex-partner was affecting their children and how their children might be feeling. This was also a common theme for parents who used *Arguing better*, particularly through the introductory video that shows children talking about how they feel when their parents argue.

"I only thought of the impact it had on me. But then I'd done the Arguing better and I could see then that it was... It has been having an impact on my daughter."

This was echoed by practitioners who felt that parents they were working with had started *'to click the way that they behave does have an impact on children.'*

How to communicate more effectively with their partner or ex-partner

Many of the parents found the resources useful for reflecting on their own communication styles and learning how to communicate more effectively with their ex-partner. One mum said she recognised that some of the conflict may have come from the way she communicated with her ex-partner.

"I realised maybe I wasn't approaching things the right way. I've taken that on board as well, and it's been really good, because it does make you realise, 'Oh, maybe I am being a bit pushy or a bit condescending.' It helped me to reflect on the way that I was approaching things as well."

One dad acknowledged that he could be *'passionate'* when *'stressed'* which resulted in him and his partner arguing about his tone of voice. He found that the skills in *Arguing better*, such as speaking for yourself and focusing on how you are feeling, had helped him to communicate more effectively and in a less judgmental manner.

"And I remember, at that time, that was kind of miraculous, really, the difference. Rather than saying, 'You're really mean to me,' which is making a judgement of it, just reframing it and saying, 'When you said that it made me feel like you were judging me,' which is... less threatening, and it's less judgemental."

Another dad echoed these sentiments. He had seen many of these communication skills presented in training for work on topics such as negotiation but had never thought to apply them to family or relationships.

How to prevent conflict from escalating

Users of all three resources took away two key messages regarding how to stop conflict from escalating. Firstly, the importance of staying calm: *"Trying to find those couple of seconds to breathe and say OK, do I really want to say and do this, or let's try to cool down the situation."* Secondly, the reminder to put themselves in their partner's shoes: *"Trying to think, 'Well, this is how they might be feeling about it.'"*

Some parents thought they would not take much away from the resources as the skills seemed 'so obvious' or like 'common sense' but were surprised by how much they had learnt from seeing *"how that situation could have been done differently."* The resources raised awareness and reminded users of how things 'should' be done.

"Until you see something in front of you in a scenario... you don't actually think about your behaviour."

Sources and impact of stress

Parents who used *Arguing better* found the content on stress and where it comes from especially useful, with one mum noting that stress can escalate when left unchecked. Particularly salient insights included understanding that stressors from outside

the relationship can manifest negatively within the relationship, and the importance of sharing stress to prevent negative outcomes.

Many of the parents who used *Arguing better* also found that it helped them to think about the impact of stress on themselves and their relationships. One dad said that using *Arguing better* had helped him realise how stress had been negatively affecting him throughout his life. He also recognised that stress contributed to negative cycles of behaviour in terms of unhealthy lifestyle choices.

"I found that very interesting, how stress affects you, with health. Because I was having stomach problems... I thought it was, I don't know, I thought I had some sort of illness or something. But I think it was actually the stress. Not eating properly and doing that sort of stuff."

In terms of stress impacting relationships, *Arguing better* helped parents to realise the importance of dealing with their own stress and their partner's stress to reduce the risk of conflict. Users also realised that there were different ways to support a partner and that offering practical solutions was not always the most helpful avenue of support. One dad said:

"That... helped me to appreciate that what my wife doesn't really need is a robot just spitting out answers or just trying to fix things or trying to make it go away. But just that acknowledgement of that emotion is a really important part."

What difference did the resources make?

Users were also able to put what they had learnt into practice with beneficial impacts on themselves, their relationships, and their children.

Improved communication with their partner or ex-partner

Nearly all of the parents we spoke to felt that their communication with their partner or ex-partner had benefitted from using one of the digital resources, whether through listening, seeing things from a partner or ex-partner's perspective, providing emotional support, or focusing on the children.

"Now I'm taking a step back and trying to listen to what he's saying. That's good, because I do realise I butt in a bit. So, just taking a step back and letting him talk. And then once he's finished, I can elaborate what I'm thinking... It helps me respect what he's saying more rather than trying to come up with solutions to help him. Just talking about it alone helps."

Parents also felt their communication had improved through compromise and being able to 'find the middle ground before the argument starts or try and compromise or try to see it from [their partner's] end.'

Change in communication approach had influenced how partners interacted

Most of the parents we spoke to had used the resources on their own, but many spoke of a positive impact on their partners' communication and interactions. The parent who had not used the resource had begun to mirror the other parent's communication behaviours.

"He's picked up on me approaching him in a certain way, and actually that's coming back, where it's more beneficial for the both of us. And I think, 'Right, this is working,' so I've got to keep up the work on my behalf."

"I've got a lot more out of it than I think I thought I would, to be honest. And he's definitely taken something from it without maybe knowing, because I get a lot more, 'Oh, look, I'm sorry I was a bit short the other day,' or 'I'm sorry...' Whereas before, it would just be swept under the rug. It's obviously making a difference."

In speaking to parents, it was often evident that just one partner was using a resource, but they were transparent about it with their partner or ex-partner. When partners did engage with the resource alongside the primary user, their responses were generally positive.

"He actually sat down and did it with me. And even he turned round and said that some of the things in there, he never knew would actually have an impact on him or anybody else."

Fewer arguments and less conflict

Two other common outcomes were arguments happening less frequently and less conflict overall. One dad who had used *Getting it right for children* found that arguments were less drawn out: "If we don't agree with something, we say we don't agree with it and then, that's the end of it. Before, it'd go on and on and on."

In the case of one of the mums we spoke to, a shift to focusing on the children and remaining calm had helped her reduce conflict around co-parenting with her ex-partner. "I have just been able to think, actually, let's calm things down. Let's come to a thing which will benefit the kids. This is all about the kids, co-parenting. Not about us. It's about them and what they need."

Strengthened relationships

Whether intact or separated, many users described improvements in the relationship with their child's other parent as a result of changes in how they communicated and saw things from their partners' perspective. Changes included feeling more respect for what a partner has to say and talking and listening rather than trying to find solutions. The resources provided "tools to really be aware of each other. I think it's strengthened us. I feel like we've really maintained that equilibrium."

Improved outcomes for children

Perhaps the most significant outcomes that parents spoke about were improved outcomes for their children. Many of the parents felt that better communication and reduced conflict with their partner or ex-partner had resulted in their children being happier and had improved their children's wellbeing.

"But he's a lot better now and I think because he can see me and his dad just like getting on with it now and getting on with our lives and not like his dad arguing with me all the time. I think it's the kids can see that now and they are a lot more happier."

There were also examples of parents coming to positive custody arrangements with their ex-partner after using *Getting it right for children* both through mediation and through the courts. In both cases, parents attributed these agreements to using *Getting it right for children* as it had helped them to communicate better, see things from their ex-partners' perspective, and stay calm in high conflict situations.

"But we have come to an agreement now, and when we have talked about the kids... it's been more of a discussion. Not just 'I'm not doing that, no, that's not happening.' It's been right, what can we do, and more of a conversation about it... something that we both agree on."

Practitioners also spoke about the impact that the resources had on parents they were working directly with, reflecting similar positive effects on the children and *'that the resource had changed the way that their relationships are.'*

One practitioner spoke about a dad who had supervised visits with his children and had managed to restore joint custody following his use of *Getting it right for children* and was in the process of applying for full custody, using the skills that he had learnt through the resource.

"He was able to express himself better and clearly, rather than the anger and frustration that he was feeling, when people were just shutting down and thinking, this is an angry bloke, to actually be able to be less angry, to explain what he thinks is happening. And also, be open to hearing what his ex-partner was saying and having some conversations around that."

How were outcomes achieved?

Implementing the RPC in Wales programme

Rollout of training to practitioners

The monthly meetings and quarterly learning sets with leads revealed the different approaches local authorities adopted to delivering the training and rolling out the resource to parents. Although the training was designed to be delivered in three sessions, starting with relationship conflict and ending with familiarisation of the resources, few followed this model. Instead, local authorities adopted one or more of the approaches summarised in Figure 1. At one end of the spectrum some local authorities utilised a **'self-directed' model** where experienced staff were encouraged to go through the resources themselves before then using them

"And I think the people we're rolling it out to have done all the training. They know how to engage with families, it's just going, this is the resource, take it forward"

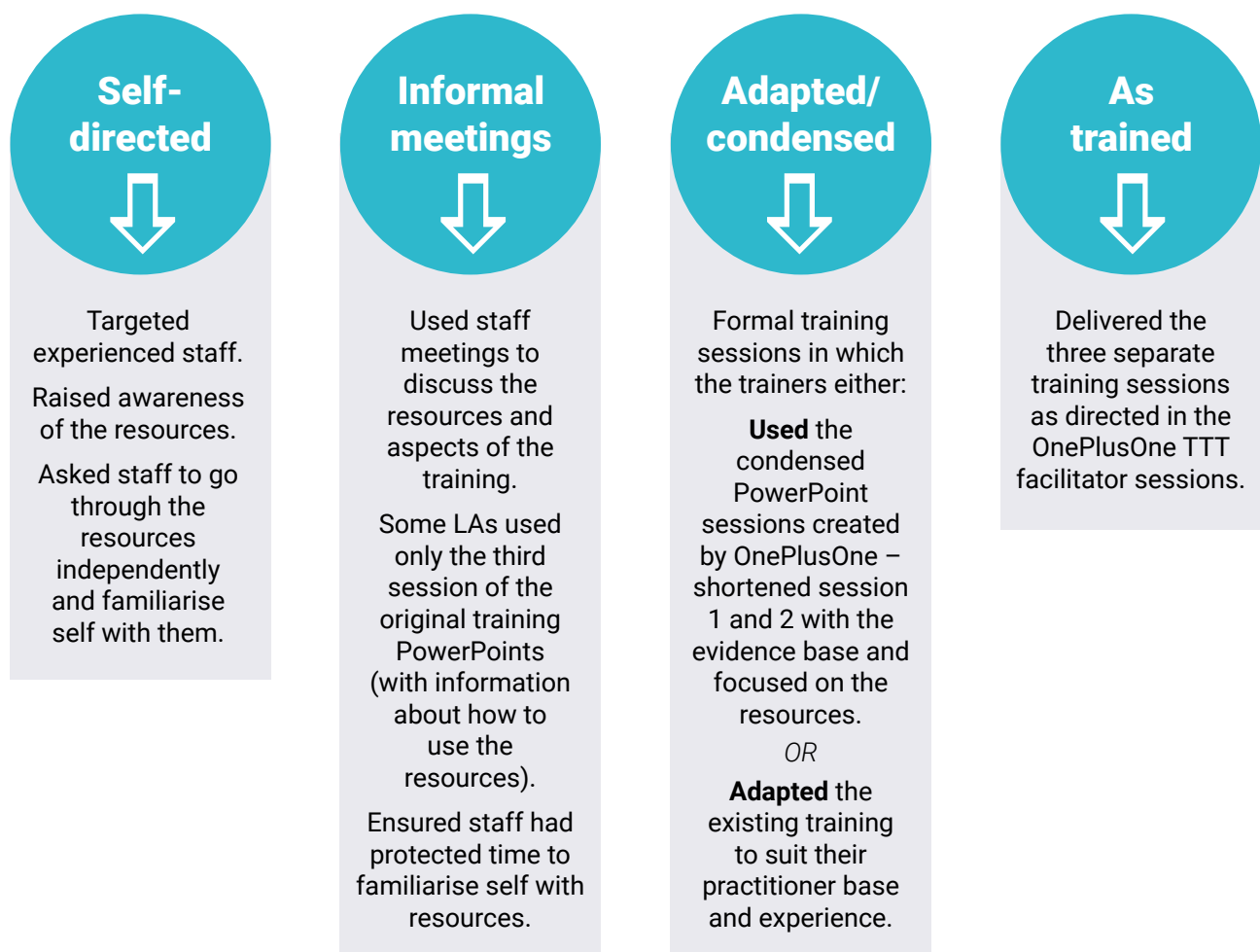
This approach assumed that practitioners had the knowledge and skills to work with parents in supporting relationships and had no real need of more intensive training, which would be like *"teaching granny to suck eggs"*. Indeed, one local authority found that experienced practitioners had *'switched off'* from the training at the start because they felt it had not been teaching them anything new.

Leads who were focussing on a self-directed approach relied on sharing the resources directly with practitioners and leads of the teams that they were targeting. For example, in one local authority the lead took a proactive approach in taking the resources to delivery managers for teams they were targeting and then spoke to the practitioners who would be rolling out the resources with parents. Similarly,

in another local authority where they also took a self-directed approach the lead shared promotional flyers directly with practitioners who would be using the resources, across early intervention, health, social work, and schools. In addition, leads had informal conversations direct with practitioners, sent out emails and seized opportunities to show practitioners the resources.

FIGURE 1

Typology of approaches to rolling out training to practitioners across local authorities



A slightly more hands-on training model – the **'informal model'** – involved using team meetings or other meetings to share the materials from the third session of the formal training with staff, giving them information about how to use the resources, and protected time to look through the content of each programme.

The majority of local authorities took the pragmatic approach to **adapt and condense the training**, for example offering shorter sessions, offering two sessions instead of three, or purposefully adapting the training to suit the needs and experiences of the practitioners they were training. One practitioner said:

"I pick out the bits that I think are appropriate for that particular cohort."

Adapting the training was seen as vital to "get more of a buy-in" and increase the chance of practitioners "delivering it and using it." In a number of cases, leads highlighted information on relationships to address practitioner concerns that they were "not relationship experts" and not "confident dealing with relationships." Some leads felt they were also having to overcome a sense among practitioners that "they didn't feel that it was their place to be delivering" support around relationships. Leads were therefore challenged to develop a culture wherein helping parents to strengthen interpersonal relationships was seen as appropriate and comfortable for practitioners. As one lead noted, "They're already working in this area and they just need to have a bit more confidence that it's okay. You don't have to have all the answers. That's not your job."

Whether practitioners were given time to look at the resource as part of the formal training, or as part of a more informal introduction, the leads were aware that 'engaged practitioners make all the difference.' When focusing on practitioners familiarising themselves with the resources and seeing the benefit of them in action, leads believed that practitioners were more likely to be engaged and use the resources with their parents. This was particularly true where practitioners saw the value of the resources "for themselves, as people."

Finally, some local authorities delivered the **full training** as it had been modelled in the OnePlusOne Train the Trainer sessions. This was deemed particularly appropriate with less experienced staff. Although we do not know how many practitioners were trained using this model, five local authorities used this approach, with feedback from leads suggesting that it was a labour-intensive approach that required a significant commitment from the trainers and trainees.

Leads who used this approach noted that they often had practitioners who signed up but did not attend and that it was difficult for just one person to deliver the training. To target this issue, the commissioning lead in one local authority made the full training compulsory. Using this approach, they trained the most practitioners (c. 100) and feedback from practitioners was overwhelmingly positive. To ensure the successful rollout of this approach, the facilitator emailed attendees regularly in the leadup to the training with clear instructions and reminders, and secured buy-in from managers through maintaining communication.

Challenges and opportunities in rolling out the training

The different approaches reflect a combination of the opportunities and challenges presented by the circumstances of each local authority and the leads charged with taking the rollout forward. Reasons behind these different approaches varied. A number of leads reported not having the time or resource to deliver three full sessions to practitioners. In addition, there was a view amongst some leads that the practitioners they were targeting already had the core skills around managing parental conflict and working with parents in conflict.

There was also a sense that both the training and resources were competing in a 'crowded market' and that it was challenging to raise awareness and keep attention focused on the programme: "People don't know what is available." Leads talked about practitioners having been "trained out" and "having training thrown at you," particularly at the end of the financial year. The problem was exacerbated by Covid lockdowns when services could not operate as usual and leads and commissioners saw training as a good use of time. Taken together, it meant practitioners felt they did not have time to understand what they were being trained in

or to embed what they had learnt into their practice.

A proliferation of training reflected what was also seen as a proliferation of programmes. The resources were competing for the attention of practitioners who had spent many years working with (and become comfortable using) established programmes such as Incredible Years and other new programmes were being introduced too. Capacity to deliver the training, attend the training, and share the resources was one of the greatest obstacles to rolling out *RPC in Wales*. As one lead commented, both for herself and other frontline practitioners, *"We've got so much, haven't we, to think about, and on our case."*

Capacity was further eroded by staff absences, often Covid-related, along with vacancies and recruitment challenges. Concerns about capacity influenced the degree to which managers were supportive of the initiative. In some cases, while not discouraging of it, managers were disengaged, for example not passing on emails about training. In other cases, restructuring meant having to start again with new team leads. Where managers were supportive, as in the case of making the training mandatory, take-up was strong, *"Because you are then getting a rollout, rather than a 'who wants to attend kind of thing' and it's up to them."*

Which teams were trained?

As seen in Figure 2, local authorities targeted a range of teams, from generic provision through to statutory. All local authorities trained teams in early intervention and prevention, around a quarter trained statutory teams, and around a third delivered to generic provision. The decision about which teams to train was largely driven by capacity within the local authorities to expand the rollout of the training.

All local authorities started by rolling out training to early intervention and prevention teams, often first approaching the managers within those teams and then cascading the training down. If there was interest and capacity following this training, leads then approached generic or statutory services to assess interest in the digital resources. Some local authorities felt that the resources were not suitable for parents accessing statutory services, as they were too early intervention and practitioners working with those parents would have different priorities.

However, other local authorities felt that parental conflict was a common issue underlying many of their statutory cases and the digital resources provided another tool that could support those parents. Similarly, if leads felt there was capacity after early intervention and prevention teams had been trained, they looked to rolling training out to generic services. The rationale for this was often about ensuring that parents had wraparound support from all of the services they accessed. For example, if a family's main concern is housing but they mention conflict to a housing support worker, that practitioner should be able to unpick those concerns and signpost the parent to the digital package.

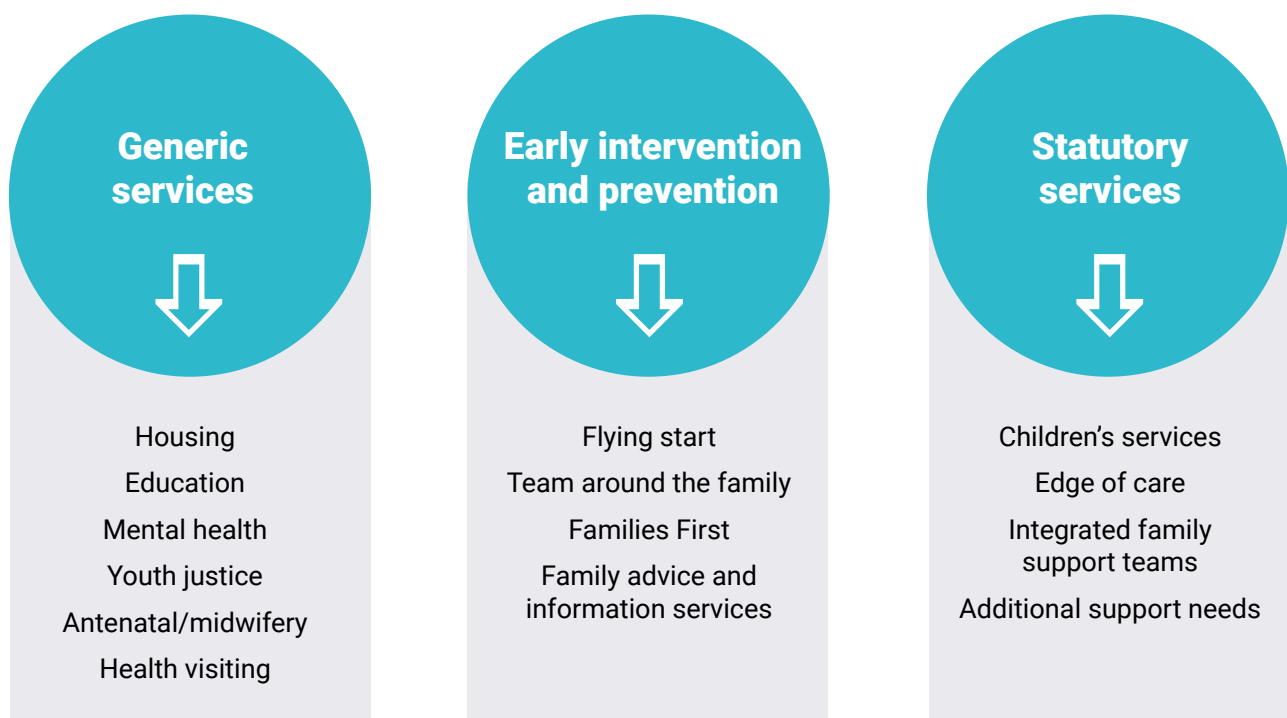
School workers were a key target for the rollout as many early intervention and prevention referrals come through schools and school workers (such as teaching assistants) are often the first to identify the impact of parental conflict on children.

Health was seen as a key generic service to be targeted by the rollout, particularly midwifery and health visiting. Many local authorities attempted to roll the training out to these teams but struggled with buy-in from management, getting practitioners to sign up, and engaging practitioners during training. Practitioners felt that midwifery in particular was *'at a crisis point'* and there

was insufficient resource within those teams to attend training or to use the resources with parents. One practitioner noted that a midwife who attended their training was very positive about the resources and could '*identify some families who need it,*' but she did not 'have the time' to use the resources with these parents and queried whether she could refer parents to the Flying Start leads delivering the training.

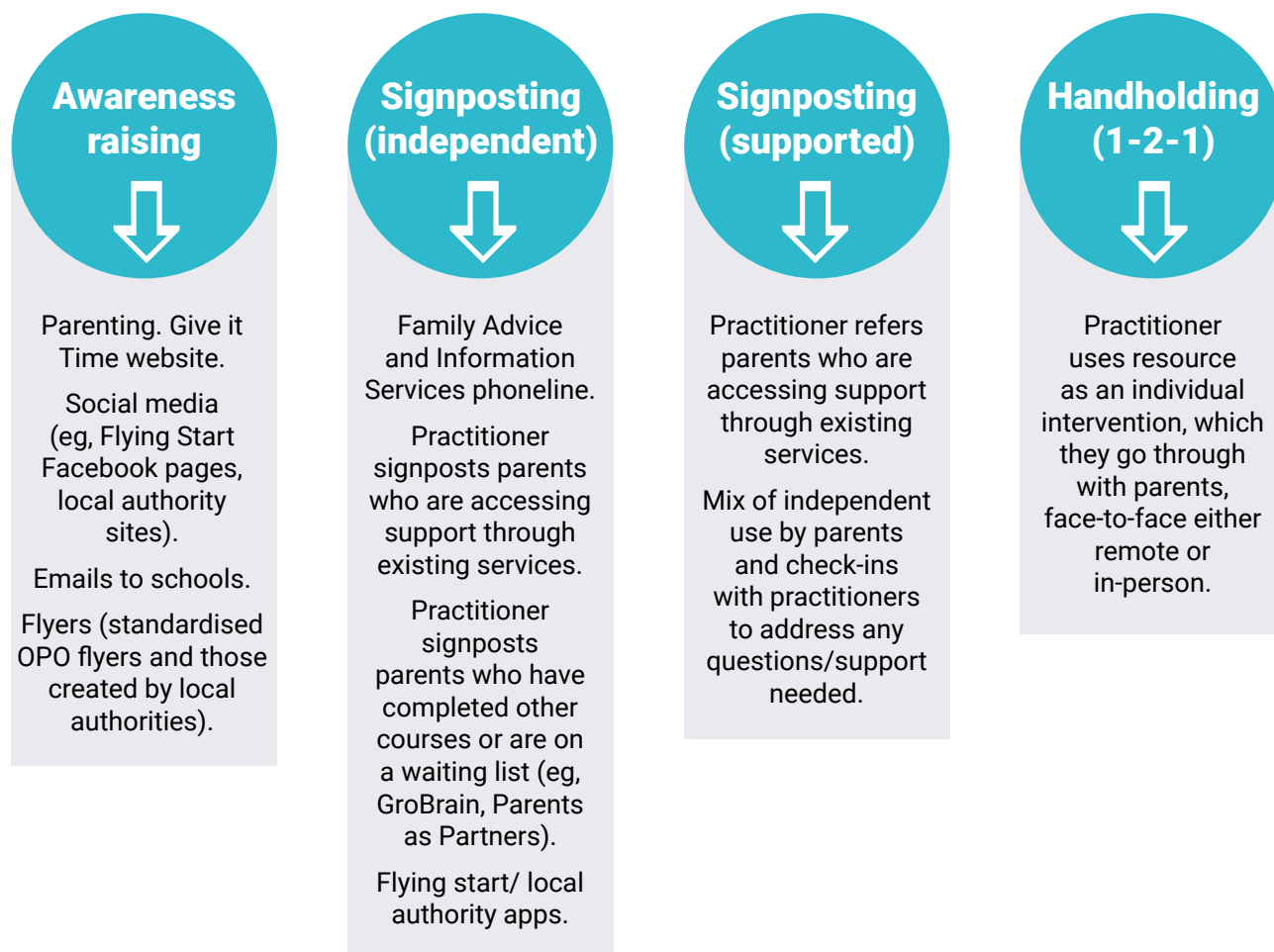
Practitioners offered suggestions for overcoming these barriers, such as putting *Me, You and Baby Too* in new parents' Red Books, creating cards for health visitors to share with parents with a QR code direct to the resources, and distributing flyers to practitioners to raise awareness and '*just get people into it*' – similar to the approach taken with the Solihull rollout in Wales.

FIGURE 2 Teams trained across local authorities



Rolling out the resources with parents
As with the training delivery, each local authority decided how they were going to roll out the digital package to parents. Approaches fell into four types, ranging from a completely self-directed delivery model based on raising parents' awareness of the resource through to fully supported one-to-one handholding, as illustrated in Figure 3.

FIGURE 3 Delivery models of digital package to parents used across local authorities



Local authorities varied in the combination of the approaches they used in sharing the resources with parents, although all used at least two or more of the four models. For example, some chose to focus on awareness-raising and independent signposting, while others used all four approaches depending on referral route, user need, and practitioner capacity. What was apparent was the value of the flexibility of the resources, which meant practitioners could adapt how they used the resource depending on the intensity of parent need and the practitioners' workload. For example, local authorities with long waitlists for parenting programmes signposted parents to one of the digital resources relevant to their needs (eg, *Arguing better* for those waiting to start a *Parents as partners* course). This served as helpful preparation for the programme they were

on the waitlist for as well as ensuring that parents were still getting much-needed support.

Local authorities with high caseloads of high-need parents sometimes adopted a hybrid approach. In other words, the practitioner could work through aspects of the resource on a one-to-one basis with a parent and leave the parent to review or work through additional elements in their own time. This meant parents benefited from targeted practitioner support alongside independent learning while enabling the practitioner to make the best use of their time.

Another key factor influencing which approaches local authorities used was the amount of resource that they had in terms of digital technology, practitioner time, and

practitioner training. Some authorities felt that they did not have the resource to roll the digital package out to parents in a purely one-to-one approach, and chose to target more parents (usually in universal settings) using a more hands-off approach (such as awareness raising).

However, some authorities felt that practitioners should work through the resources with parents with greater needs on a one-to-one basis and so chose to roll out the resources to fewer parents. This meant that authorities had to make the choice between reaching more parents (who may not be motivated or engaged) or reaching fewer parents through more targeted routes. Reflecting on their different approaches in the action learning sets, leads recognised the value in finding a middle ground in terms of approaches that could balance depth and reach of engagement.

The way the resources were used with families was shaped by structural factors, but it also reflected practitioners' decisions about what would be most helpful to each family. One practitioner explained:

"It's the skill of the workers as well, though, isn't it, picking and choosing how they know their families. If they know their families well enough, they'll know whether they can just signpost them and let them get on with it, and then check in with them on that issue, or they'll know, no, this family actually needs me to do this with them."

Using different delivery models also allowed practitioners to reach a wider range of parents than we had originally expected. The initial training group for this rollout was targeted at early intervention and prevention teams, and the resources for universal and universal-plus parents. However, parenting teams in statutory services saw the value in the resources and were able to use them alongside other support with parents who had higher levels of need.

Raising the profile and awareness of the resources

As with the training, the way local authorities raised awareness of the resources with parents depended on the delivery models they were using. Local authorities who were using a handholding approach would speak directly to parents about the resources to get buy-in before using them. Some local authorities raised awareness of the resources as part of other programmes, signposting parents to the digital package after completing another parenting programme or, while a parent was on a waitlist for another programme. The local authority with the most success in terms of registrations used an approach that targeted parents at different stages and in different places. This included creating promotional flyers for practitioners already supporting parents, advertising the resources on Facebook, and recruiting schools to email parents about the resources. A number of parents we interviewed in this local authority had come to the resource through a school email, which proved to be a particularly successful means of targeting parents early before difficulties arise. This approach also helps to remove some of the stigma from doing a course about relationship conflict and increase the reach: *"If it's universal and everyone's gaining from it, then everyone's going to be talking about it and telling friends about it. Rather than, I'm on a parenting course."*

Flyers were seen as a useful tool for raising awareness of the resources among parents and practitioners by a number of local authorities. Some local authorities created promotional flyers and shared them among wider teams *'to share with the families they're working with.'* Other authorities felt that flyers would be useful to put up in prominent places where parents go, such as community centres and GP surgeries. An important element of raising awareness was targeting different teams and levels of support for parents, such as leads

who *'shared it across whole authority – all childcare support teams as well as social services teams'* and *'with health team, social workers, schools and wider teams within Early Help.'*

Another way that local authorities got the resources out to universal parents was through the Family Advice and Information Service lines (FAIS). Leads disseminated the resources and training to FAIS staff who could then signpost parents who were calling for advice on a range of topics, such as childcare or schools, to the digital resources.

Finally, many local authorities used social media and local authority websites to advertise the resources. Some local authorities had a structured campaign in which their communications team created posts to be regularly shared on the local authority health board site and their Flying Start Facebook page. Many practitioners felt that it would be helpful for the resources to be advertised on the Wales-wide *'Parenting. Give it time'* website thereby *'capitalising on the reach that Parenting. Give it time already has.'*

What worked about the programmes?

Despite the pressures and challenges involved in rolling out the resource, lead practitioners and those they worked with were extremely positive about the resources and their potential impact. Practitioners found that the resources fitted well into their existing provision and offered options for supporting parents that they currently did not have, particularly when it came to separated parents parenting together. It provided an option for supporting co-parents in conflict through *Getting it right for children*; and it provided social workers with an option for working with each parent separately: *"So it's been a useful resource because the social worker can then see how each parent is coping with the ideas."*

The breadth of the offer and variations in how it could be delivered meant practitioners felt they had *'three really good resources there for different people at different times in their parenting lives'* and that the resources could be used by *'different-skilled members of the team across all of the teams'* as well as in *"reaching more families from all types of backgrounds."*

In addition to filling a gap in existing provision, practitioners spoke about the digital package fitting into their existing pathways and as *"a really good tool to have as an extra to everything else that we've got in place."* A key attribute was the flexibility of the resource. As the typology of delivery approaches indicates, the resource was used in a range of ways. For example, some practitioners used the content from the resources to engage parents and *"open up the conversation"* about difficult topics. Practitioners also used the videos to give parents a visual demonstration of skills that they were learning in other programmes, such as including a clip from *Arguing better* in place of roleplay to demonstrate communication skills for sections of Parents as Partners, or adding *Me, You and Baby Too* to the end of the Solihull programme. Although this is not how the resources were intended to be used – and will be reflected in the lower-than-expected engagement figures – it is clear that practitioners found that the digital package *'fits in with the existing model'* of support for parents.

Practitioners felt that parents also benefited from the flexible nature of the digital package. It allowed parents to access them when they were *'feeling motivated'* and gave parents *'a sense of independence and control over their own life'*. Other advantages to its online nature included appealing to a wider range of parents. Parents who would not normally approach services for help could access it independently, because

"it's a big step to pick up the phone and ask for support." For those already engaged with services, online delivery appealed to people who would not come to a face-to-face group. *'They could think, "I can sit online, I don't even have to have my camera on if I don't want to."* Although relatively few fathers appeared to use the resources, the digital nature was seen as particularly attractive to fathers.

Practitioners found the resources *"easy to use [and] easy to understand"* and relatable to the needs of the parents they were supporting.

"Everyone working in this kind of field could benefit from doing the training and having that as a resource. It is something that comes up with everyone. When I watch it myself, I was like, 'Oh, yes, right, I need to apply this to myself.'"

The video clips were popular and useful. Their brevity lent them to sharing more complex ideas easily and parents could dip in and out as a *"little short module"* or *"sit there in between TV programmes in the evening."* Practitioners and parents liked the use of UK actors, compared to many programmes that had been imported from the USA. British accents meant parents could *"relate a little better to things they see."* And the content itself was seen as up to date: *"I love the resource. I love how clear it is and how modern it is."* The appeal of the resources was seen as universal, regardless of circumstances or sociodemographic status: *"That's why I love it. It can be used brilliantly with all families, I think."*

The appeal and impact extended to practitioners' own lives. One lead described a practitioner's emotional response to *Me, You and Baby Too* during a training session as *'a lightbulb moment... to realise that this is our own lives as well.'* Following this, the lead ensured that all practitioners had read the leaflet describing the resources

and had registered for the digital package in advance of the training. This allowed practitioners to assess any personal concerns before training and email the trainer about them. Another lead spoke to practitioners individually about any overlap between their personal lives and the content of the digital package, offering a bespoke approach to introducing the resources outside of a staff team environment.

The evaluation process had a surprise benefit of supporting practitioners through the rollout of the resource. The regular check-ins, monthly meetings, and quarterly learning sets were useful for reminding practitioners to push the resources and *'keeping them on the agenda.'* Although unintended, this structured support from an external body bringing the learning together was a valuable asset in maintaining the momentum of the delivery.

What was challenging?

Despite the value of digital resources at a time when practitioners could not work face to face, practitioners did identify some drawbacks to the digital nature of the resources. Challenges included resources being inaccessible to families with learning difficulties or dyslexia, families with low digital skills of staff and parents, a *'lack of trust in anonymity online'*, little to no access to data or digital devices, and a fundamental change in how staff work with parents (ie, from face-to-face to digital).

These challenges influenced the delivery models that local authorities chose to use and the parents they worked with. For example, in local authorities with large rural communities there are 'blackspots' where it is not possible to get Wi-Fi or data signals. Practitioners in these local authorities had to think creatively about how to get parents to access the resources, such as printing off examples from the practitioner guide or adapting the content into handouts for parents.

"The resources are useful, it's just about infiltrating people in different ways."

This shows that practitioners saw the real value in the resources but were hampered by a lack of existing pathways to use digital resources with some families.

How parents accessed the resources was another important consideration for practitioners in choosing how to roll out the resources. Some parents were reluctant to create logins or to use their own devices to access the resources. Maintaining parent motivation to use the resources was also a relevant factor. To overcome these challenges, many practitioners spoke about using their own login details to go through the resources with parents. This can be seen in the engagement metrics reported above, with practitioner sessions significantly more engaged than parent sessions across the resources.

To some extent, the digital model also suffered with digital fatigue – a challenge unique to the Covid-19 pandemic. Some parents felt saturated by online interactions and were keen to return to face-to-face groups or meetings with practitioners. Over the last six months practitioners have noted that parents are keen to *"meet [their] friends and have a coffee"* rather than *"talk to us onscreen."*

The delivery timeframe presented a separate challenge. Practitioners observed that *"it takes a lot longer to embed these things than maybe was initially thought. And a year's definitely not enough."* This sentiment was echoed across local authorities, that this rollout year had been 'good to raise awareness' but that they need more time to embed the resources. Practitioners felt they had been using other programmes such as Circle of Security for so long that they could *"remember those strategies in your sleep"* and that as *"people get more confident with OnePlusOne... that will then become one of the ones they think about"* more frequently.

What worked best?

To try and understand whether any particular approaches worked best, we looked at changes in parents' outcome measures and engagement metrics and whether these were influenced by the type of delivery model used. Our measures of reach and engagement indicate that local authorities where an awareness-raising delivery model was used alongside a self-directed training model had the strongest performance statistics in terms of ratio of registrations to resources started, number of sessions, and completion rates.

Other strong performers used adapted training models and a combination of approaches across the support spectrum. However, as described in the learning and impact section above, lack of data meant we were not able to determine whether a user's local authority or delivery model influenced the effectiveness of the resources in improving relationship outcomes. Embedding the resources into practice over the forthcoming year offers the opportunity to focus efforts on collecting sufficient parent outcome data to help answer the question of what works best.

Outcome data aside, feedback from practitioners and parents highlights that what works best overall is the flexibility to roll out and use the resources in the way that best suits the practitioners and parents. The work of raising parents' awareness and extending reach through dedicated marketing efforts, such as through social media activity and printed marketing materials, might be best taken forward on a central Wales-wide basis, freeing up leads to focus on equipping fellow practitioners and working with parents.

“

I split up from my son's dad last summer and contact has been really difficult. He wasn't turning up when he said he would to pick up our son and then wouldn't bring him back when he was supposed to. It was really difficult not to get into arguments with him in front of our son, I felt like he wanted me to react and shout. After doing the *Getting it right for children* and the *Arguing better* resources, it has made me more aware of how us arguing affects our son and has made me see it from his point of view. Doing the resources at my own pace when I was ready to and then being able to go back over them was really useful.

Parent 2

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section brings together key insights from the evaluation and identifies potential next steps as the *RPC in Wales* programme is further rolled out and embedded.

Key insights

The findings provide insight into how the resources were rolled out to practitioners and the approaches they took to sharing the resources with parents. The volume of data on the impact of the resource on parents is limited, but the available data indicates that parents saw statistically meaningful improvements in aspects of their relationships regardless of which resource they used. Interviews with parents and feedback from practitioners indicate that both were able to use the resources in ways that suited their needs, circumstances, and time constraints. The findings also show that parents have taken a range of insights away from the resources around how they communicate, how they manage stress, and how they relate to a partner. Furthermore, those insights have often been converted into changes in behaviours that have resulted in a positive impact on parents, their relationships, and their children.

While there is much more to learn about the nature and extent of the use and impact of the resources by and on parents, we know enough to suggest that continuing to roll out the programme provides a valuable return on investment. It can fill a gap in the toolkit of resources available to practitioners working with families, and reach a range of families such as parents of school-age children who may not usually come under the care of the local authority teams. It is also clear that local authorities have taken very different approaches to how they have rolled out the training and shared resources. That variety reflects factors specific to each local authority, such

as the structure of their service provision, the capacity of those leading the *RPC in Wales* initiative, differences in practitioners' experience and confidence in working with parents, and the range of other programmes and initiatives ongoing within the local authority. More than anything, however, it points to the flexible nature of the resource package, valued by practitioners and parents alike.

In terms of how practitioners were trained in using the resources, the spectrum runs from replicating the full three sessions embodied in the TTT training through to an informal introduction to the resource. How practitioners shared the resources with parents is also spread across a spectrum. At one end, practitioners provided one-to-one support addressing aspects of the resource in bitesize chunks over a period of time. At the other, parents were signposted to the resources by, for example, Family Advice and Information Services.

Those local authorities that saw the highest take-up focused their efforts on raising awareness, signposting parents to the resources, and encouraging parents to sign up independently. A more limited effort was expended on providing more intensive support as parents worked through the resources. These local authorities also focused on a self-directed training approach (with the exception of one local authority, that had a small number of registrations but excellent engagement rates).

While working more intensively with parents – particularly those with higher needs – remains important, the resources are also highly accessible and effective early intervention tools which parents can use alone. It therefore makes sense to capitalise on their ease of use through widespread marketing and signposting.

Taking *RPC in Wales* forward

Whichever approach local authorities took, there was recognition of the combined impact of Covid with significant demands on practitioners' capacity. After one year, they are only just starting to begin the process of embedding the resource into daily practice. More than anything, local authorities wanted time to take the learning from what felt like a pilot and begin to properly embed the resources into their service offer.

Action learning sets held with local authority leads provided fertile ground for sharing learning and generating new thinking on how to move forward in equipping practitioners to use the resources and roll them out to parents. Their feedback highlighted the need to strike a balance between establishing a national brand and delivery model and enabling approaches that reflected the needs, services, and circumstances of each local authority. These issues are explored below.

Equipping practitioners to use the resources

The range of approaches adopted by local authorities reflects different needs, levels of experience, capacity, and team training models. It suggests the value of a tiered approach that allows leads and their teams to agree the most appropriate means of equipping their practitioners. For some, that might be a full course, while for others a brief introduction would be enough. In either case, the training needs to involve protected time for practitioners to work through the resources in order to build confidence and secure practitioner buy-in.

Training should also focus on how to use the resources. Firstly, how to use them one-to-one or with a couple, whether face-to-face or online and secondly, how to move from a one-to-one model to a group setting and running them like a course. Some

practitioners felt at ease doing this, but others were looking for more help. Some leads struggled to secure the time required to run courses and there were concerns about the sustainability of a model that relied on so few people within a local authority. One option to overcome this is to provide externally run courses rather than the TTT model. This could be offered on a Wales-wide basis as part of building a national infrastructure to support the programme (see below). It would also address the issue raised by some leads that practitioners do not place the same value on training led by internal staff.

Another option, which could run in parallel, is to create an online practitioner platform where practitioners can self-train. This would offer an expanded version of the resources with additional sections on how to use it, supporting information about relationships, and reflective questions. As leads noted, this could be offered as a form of professional development for a much wider range of practitioners – not just those on the front line but those who have brief interactions with parents, such as nursery workers or teaching assistants. It could also operate as a refresher course, with practitioners encouraged to revisit the resources every couple of years and obtain, for example, a certificate to show managers that they have completed the training.

This practitioner platform may serve to support the aspiration of leads to reach and equip as many teams as possible to use the resource with parents or signpost them to it. The typology of teams trained (Figure 2) shows that the resources were shared not only with early intervention and prevention teams but also with generic services (eg, housing, health, perinatal health) and statutory services (Edge of Care, Integrated Family Support Teams). Practitioners were keen to continue recruiting other services to use the resources, particularly in midwifery and health visiting who were seen as “key”.

Providing different training options and resources externally, as well as marketing (see below), would ease some of the pressure on local authority leads and enable them to focus on the support and activities most appropriate to their area. For example, one lead was running active learning sets so practitioners could hear from one another about how best to use the resource, troubleshoot problems, and build confidence. Leads also play a vital role in acting as a reservoir of expertise about the resources, such as introducing the resource to new starts, and co-ordinating awareness raising.

Supporting system and culture change

Establishing the resources as part of normal practice requires a degree of change to cultures and systems. Creating a culture around supporting parental relationships is important in overcoming a perception amongst some practitioners that supporting relationships is outside of their remit. Leads worked hard in helping practitioners to understand where it fits into their practice and why it is appropriate.

Training, peer support, and mentoring all play an important part in supporting culture change, but it also requires changes in systems and processes. For example, as one area has done, teams could list the resources on the parent monitoring form “to keep it on people’s radars.” Managers could also use regular supervision meetings with staff to ask about use of the resource, as another area has done. However, culture and system change also require initiatives that extend beyond the scope of leads, such as active buy-in from senior leadership, integrating relationship support into job descriptions, and performance reviews. Nationally, there was a suggestion that the resources should be included on the Wales-wide ‘A’ list of parenting programmes.

Models of engagement through digital resources

Practitioners were positive about the resources in terms of content, relevance, accessibility, and need. However, it seemed that the lack of a unified approach to engaging parents using digital resources was a stumbling block in the rollout. Being able to switch from face-to-face services to a digital delivery presented practitioners with challenges such as digital poverty (from access to devices to living in Wi-Fi ‘blackspots’), concerns around data protection and anonymity, and getting parents and practitioners used to working in a digital way.

To support practitioner development and help them to overcome common issues, future delivery would benefit from creating and testing a delivery pathway that outlines basic approaches to working with parents using digital resources. This would build in the challenges and opportunities presented by a digital delivery model, rather than addressing problems ad hoc.

Integrating the resources with other programmes and initiatives

The proliferation of other parenting support programmes was both an obstacle and an opportunity with regard to embedding *RPC in Wales* into normal practice. It entered a crowded market in which the resources had to compete for attention, often against well-established programmes. Local authorities and the different teams within them would benefit from time to take stock of what is on offer across the spectrum of need, providing an opportunity to help parents move seamlessly between programmes. For example, some local authorities flagged *Me, You and Baby Too* to parents once they had completed the GroBrain training, or tagged a *Me, You Baby and Too* session onto the end of the Solihull training.

Although there is a natural fit with the perinatal programmes and *Me, You and Baby Too*, there is a need and opportunity to consider where resources such as *Arguing better* fit with domestic abuse provision. Practitioners were beginning to explore whether families struggling with situational domestic abuse, as stresses piled up on them, might benefit from accessing *Arguing better* as a preventative tool to stop the escalation of conflict. Other approaches discussed by practitioners included using the digital resources to highlight what conflict looks like and to explore the differences between conflict and domestic abuse. Local authorities may want to explore whether and how they can provide a carefully managed bridge between early intervention and domestic abuse services. At the very least there is scope to flag the resources in the context of other training, such as the Ask and Act training on domestic abuse so that those practitioners can signpost to *Arguing better* where appropriate.

Piggybacking onto other national initiatives provides further opportunities to raise awareness. For example, practitioners saw an opportunity to incorporate links to the digital resources in the tools and information being promoted around the new anti-smacking legislation.

Creating a national identity and infrastructure

Evaluation has shown how important local autonomy is to the rollout of the training and resources. However, opportunities to tie in with national initiatives such as the anti-smacking legislation also highlight the benefits of developing a national identity and infrastructure to support the rollout. These include:

- Placing the resources on the national 'Parenting. Give it time' website, and enabling access through a single nationwide login.
- Taking a centralised approach to marketing and awareness raising.

- Introducing the resources or running an abbreviated version of the training through the Children in Wales webinars, which would help to raise the profile of the *RPC in Wales* programme with health teams.
- Holding a Senedd launch to establish the programme at a national level.
- Running a virtual Wales-wide refresher event that brings leads together to share good practice and case studies and catalyse rollout.
- Using informal Welsh language for any future translations of the resources or marketing materials, making them more accessible to parents with low literacy levels and encouraging use of any Welsh language options.

Marketing and awareness raising

Local authorities varied in whether they had developed marketing materials to support the rollout of the resource, depending on the capacity and skills of the teams. Some leads had borrowed templates and flyers from other local authorities and adapted them for use in their areas.

Creating a national identity for the programme could go hand in hand with a more centralised approach to marketing, such as providing standardised flyers and posters that areas could modify. Hard copies are particularly useful for some practitioners, such as health visitors, who can give them to parents and leave them at parent groups. Practitioners were also keen to see a logo, which would both support the development of a national brand and help practitioners to visualise and remember the resources.

Some local authorities had a very strong social media presence while others did not have any kind of social media platform. Being able to use social media, and in particular the Flying Start Facebook pages, was a successful awareness raising technique and was an effective way of

reaching universal parents. Social media platforms can reach parents who may not yet need service support but who are experiencing conflict. Supporting local authorities to capitalise on this audience through increased awareness of the importance of reaching parents where they already are (ie, social media platforms) will increase reach and awareness raising to a wider audience. We have used this approach in previous projects with positive results including our *See it differently* project when we researched where parents go for parenting and education support. We then placed short video resources about parental conflict in places where parents were already accessing support for other things (eg, Facebook groups, Instagram, and community centres). On Facebook alone we reached over one million users.

Sharing and catalysing good practice

Practitioners found the regional quarterly learning sets particularly useful as they enabled them to share challenges they had had in rolling the resources out and what they had done to overcome these. The monthly meetings with OnePlusOne also acted as a prompt to practitioners, making them feel accountable, and offering support. Although such frequent catchups may be excessive, there is an appetite and need for facilitating peer support and learning across local authorities. This could form part of a nationally organised infrastructure as suggested above.

Refining the functionality of the resources

Finally, opportunities to improve the functionality of the resource were identified. These included creating the following:

Practitioner platform

As well as offering self-guided training, a practitioner platform could enable practitioners to dip in and out of the resource, unconstrained by having to

work through it in order to find clips or information they wanted to use. It could also operate as a library of good practice, capturing and sharing approaches identified in the action learning sets or shared by individual practitioners.

Hybrid resource

Some of the difficulties around a purely digital resource could be addressed by offering a hybrid resource, giving practitioners the option to print content and share hard copies of the resource. In one area, practitioners were given hard copies of the practitioner's guide which they could take out on visits and dip in and out of with parents. Some practitioners were also keen for a workbook to be developed that they could leave with parents as a means of building on and integrating the learning from the resource. Parents would be able to share this with other practitioners to demonstrate what they were learning.

Introductory session

Practitioners saw value in developing an introductory section for the resources. They could use this as a means of introducing a resource, providing a taster of what it would cover (eg, video clips, key visuals) and develop parents' understanding of what constitutes a healthy relationship. This links back to the question of where the resources might fit with support for domestic abuse with the suggestion that an introductory section could help parents understand normal conflict, and where it becomes situational or domestic abuse.

Conclusions and next steps

The *RPC in Wales* programme offered practitioners a toolkit of resources to support parents at different life stages and circumstances to manage stress and conflict in their relationships. Feedback from parents and practitioners has been overwhelmingly positive. Practitioners are keen to maintain ongoing access to the

resources because they are up to date, accessible, and relatable, filling a gap that benefits a range of parents. Relationship outcome measures for parents who have used the resource show significant improvements.

Use of the resources was lower than expected. One significant reason is the lack of time local authorities had to embed the resources (and the inevitable hindrance of Covid). Many felt they had only just begun that process as the evaluation ended. Another reason is insufficient awareness of the resource amongst parents.

We have offered a range of recommendations for further embedding the resources into the local service offer. These strike a balance between continuing to foster the local autonomy that has enabled local authorities and parents to make the most of the flexibility that the resources offer and providing Wales-wide centralised support. In particular, we recommend orchestrating a nationally co-ordinated and focused awareness raising campaign that reaches parents where they are (social media platforms, schools, parent groups).

The evaluation offers some insights into the effectiveness of the resource and what works in rolling it out, but more remains to be understood about which delivery models achieve the best outcomes for parents, in the short and longer term. Targeted evaluation over the coming year could use a controlled group comparison approach to examine the efficacy of the different training and delivery models, with the option to follow parents longitudinally. To further understand how practitioners use digital resources, a pilot study to examine a structured digital delivery pathway would also be of benefit.

Digital resources offer the opportunity to reach users who have previously been hard to engage. As digital resources become increasingly relevant to practice it will become more important to understand how practitioners can use them effectively in practice. Exploring these delivery models with resources that have been shown to have a positive impact on parents is the next step in creating an accessible, relatable, and engaging support pathway for parents and practitioners.

Appendices



APPENDIX A

Outcome and demographic measures

Getting it right for children outcome and demographic measures

Emotional Adaptation to Relationship Dissolution Assessment (EARDA; Millings et al., 2020)

1. From 0% to 100%, how much do each of these statements describe how you currently feel about your separation? (0% = 'Does not describe my feelings at all' to 100% 'Describes my feelings exactly').
 - a) I feel ashamed I couldn't keep the relationship together.
 - b) I feel guilty I broke up the relationship.
 - c) I feel relieved the relationship is over.
 - d) I feel anxious about what will happen next.
 - e) I feel like I can't get over what I have lost.
 - f) I feel angry at my ex-partner.
 - g) I feel resentful towards my ex-partner.
 - h) I feel frustrated by my situation.
 - i) I feel like a failure because my relationship broke down.
 - j) I feel hopeful about the future.

DWP reducing parental conflict – separated parents subscale (DWP, 2019)

Considering the last four weeks, how often does the following happen between you and your former partner or spouse (your ex)?

1= Never 2=Rarely 3= Sometimes 4=Often 5=Always

1. When you and your ex discuss parenting issues, how often does it lead to an argument?
2. How often is there an atmosphere of hostility and anger?
3. How often are your conversations stressful and tense?
4. How often do you and your former partner have basic differences of opinion about issues related to parenting?
5. How often do you agree when making decisions about your child / children?
1=Very poorly 2=Poorly 3=Adequately 4=Well 5=Very well
6. How well do you share responsibility for raising your child / children?
7. How well do you communicate about your child / children?

1. Have you used any of our other resources? (eg, *Me, You and Baby Too*, or *Arguing better*)? If so, which one/s?

2. How useful have you found *Getting it right for children*?
Not at all useful A little useful Somewhat useful
Mostly useful Very useful

3. What have you learned from using *Getting it right for children*?

A BIT ABOUT YOU

1. How would you describe your gender? (please circle)

Female Male Transgender Non-binary

Prefer to self-describe

2. What is your age?

3. What is your household income? (please circle)

£0-£16,000 £16,001-£30,000 £30,001-£60,000

£60,001-£90,000 £90,000+

4. How many children do you have?

5. What age are your children?

6. How would you describe your relationship with the other parent of your child? (please circle)

I'm thinking of separating I'm in the process of separating

I'm separated Other

7. How long have you been separated (in years and months?)

Arguing better outcome and demographic questions

Perceived Stress Scale-4 (PSS-4; Cohen et al., 1983)

1=Never 2=Almost never 3=Sometimes 4=Fairly often 5=Very often

1. In the last month, how often have you felt unable to control the important things in your life?

2. In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?

3. In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?

4. In the last month, how often have you felt that difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?

Dyadic Coping Inventory – support subscale (Bodenmann, 2008)

1=Never/ very rarely 2=Rarely 3=Sometimes 4=Often 5=Very often

1. How does your partner communicate stress to you?

- a) My partner lets me know that they appreciate my practical support.
- b) They tell me how they feel and that they would appreciate my emotional support.

2. When I am stressed...

- a) My partner shows me they understand how I am feeling.
- b) My partner lets me know that they are on my side.
- c) My partner listens to me and gives me time and space to talk about what is really bothering me.
- d) My partner tries to help me to see the situation in a different light.
- e) My partner looks at the problem with me and tries to help me to find a solution.

1. Have you used any of our other resources? (eg, Me, You and Baby Too, or Getting it right for children)? If so, which one/s?
2. How useful have you found *Arguing better*?
Not at all useful A little useful Somewhat useful Mostly useful Very useful
3. What have you learned from using *Arguing better*?

A BIT ABOUT YOU

1. How would you describe your gender? (please circle)
Female Male Transgender Non-binary
Prefer to self-describe
2. What is your age?
3. What is your household income? (please circle)
£0-£16,000 £16,001-£30,000 £30,001-£60,000
£60,001-£90,000 £90,000+
4. How would you describe your relationship with your partner? (please circle)
Married or civil partnership In a relationship and living together
Separated or divorced In a relationship and not living together
Prefer to self-describe

Me, You and Baby Too outcome and demographic questions

DWP reducing parental conflict – intact parents subscale (DWP, 2019)

1= Never 2=Rarely 3= Sometimes 4=Often 5=Always

1. During the past four weeks, how often did your partner:

- a) Let you know they really care about you?
- b) Show love or affection towards you?
- c) Let you know they appreciate your ideas or the things you do?
- d) Help you to do something that is important to you?
- a) Show support and understanding towards you?
- e) Criticise you?
- f) Argue with you when you disagreed about something?
- g) Get angry at you?
- h) Shout at you because they were upset with you?

Couple Satisfaction Index – 4 (CSI-4; Funk and Rogge, 2007)

1. All things considered, how happy are you in your relationship

Extremely unhappy Fairly unhappy A little unhappy
Happy Fairly happy Extremely happy Perfect

2. How close are you and your partner?

Not at all close A little close Somewhat close Mostly close
Very close Extremely close

3. How fulfilling is your relationship with your partner? =

Not at all A little Somewhat Mostly
Almost completely Completely

4. In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?

Not at all A little Somewhat Mostly
Almost completely Completely

Dyadic Coping Inventory – support subscale (Bodenmann, 2008)

1=Never/ very rarely 2=Rarely 3=Sometimes 4=Often 5=Very often

1. How does your partner communicate stress to you?

- a. My partner lets me know that they appreciate my practical support.
- b. They tell me how they feel and that they would appreciate my emotional support.

2. When I am stressed...

- a) My partner shows me they understand how I am feeling.
- b) My partner lets me know that they are on my side.
- c) My partner listens to me and gives me time and space to talk about what is really bothering me.
- d) My partner tries to help me to see the situation in a different light.
- e) My partner looks at the problem with me and tries to help me to find a solution.

1. Have you used any of our other resources? (eg, *Arguing better*, or *Getting it right for children*)? If so, which one/s?

2. How useful have you found *Me, You and Baby Too*?

Not at all useful A little useful Somewhat useful Mostly useful Very useful

3. What have you learned from using *Me, You and Baby Too*?

A BIT ABOUT YOU

1. How would you describe your gender? (please circle)

Female Male Transgender Non-binary

Prefer to self-describe

2. What is your age?

3. What is your household income? (please circle)

£0-£16,000 £16,001-£30,000 £30,001-£60,000

£60,001-£90,000 £90,000+

4. How would you describe your relationship with your partner? (please circle)

Married or civil partnership In a relationship and living together

Separated or divorced In a relationship and not living together

Prefer to self-describe

5. Are you or your partner pregnant? (please circle)

Yes, I am Yes, my partner is pregnant No, our child is already born?

6. If you or your partner are pregnant, how many weeks pregnant are you?

7. If your child is already born, how old are they?

8. How many children do you have? (If you are pregnant, please include this pregnancy)

APPENDIX B

Evidence base for digital package resources

Vulnerability stress adaptation model (VSA)

The theory: The VSA is an influential and comprehensive theoretical model based on a review of 115 longitudinal studies representing over 45,000 marriages (Bradbury and Karney, 1995). The VSA model helps us to understand the impact of stressful life events in the context of individuals' histories and the methods they use to adapt in these circumstances. Some of these adaptations help to support the relationship while others may undermine it.

Our application: The content was designed to help users understand the strengths and vulnerabilities each partner brings to the relationship; how their respective strengths and vulnerabilities influence the way they respond to stressful events they encounter such as the TTP; and how they can adapt their behaviours to support one another during these times.

Behaviour Modelling Training (BMT)

The theory: Drawing on social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) BMT uses visual demonstrations of behaviours to help learners acquire new knowledge and skills. It provides opportunities for feedback and social reinforcement to participants as they practice skills to maximise the likelihood of adopting new behaviours.

Our application: Video clips based on BMT techniques were used to promote behaviour change. These reflected the different components needed to support behaviour change:

- **Attentional.** Observing ideal behaviours from least difficult to most difficult.
- **Retentional.** Memorising the new skills.
- **Reproduction.** Practicing the observed skills.
- **Motivational.** Positive reinforcements for demonstrating the newly learned skill.

Digital behaviour change interventions.

The theory: Digital behaviour change interventions employ digital technologies to encourage and support behaviour change. They can include techniques such as nudges, gamification, and goal setting.

Our application: The resource used the COM-B model of digital behaviour change (Michie et al., 2011) which recognises that behaviour comprises:

1. **Capability.** Knowledge, skills, stamina
2. **Opportunity.** Time, resources, prompts, support
3. **Motivation.** Motives, desires, impulses

Couples Coping Enhancement Training (CCET)

CCET is a training resource designed to teach couples how to cope with stress both individually and together, through dyadic coping. Developed by Bodenmann and Shantinath (2004) in Switzerland, it has never been trialled in the UK and was originally designed to be delivered by psychologists or other specialists although recent adaption tested delivery via DVD (Bodenmann & Shantinath 2004; Bodenmann et al. 2014).

Couple Care and Coping Programme (CCC-P)

CCC-P combines the dyadic coping training of CCET with the practical parenting approach offered by the Couple CARE for Parents (CCP) programme. The latter is a psychoeducative programme designed to help new parents cope with the transition to parenthood, providing insight into what to expect, couple communication, conflict management, how to manage changes, and parenting together. CCC-P was delivered by midwives in a trial in Switzerland but has not been trialled in the UK (Anderegg et al., 2018; Petch & Halford, 2008).

APPENDIX C

Flyers for parents and practitioners



PARENTS

Having constructive, supportive relationships has never been as important as it is right now. You can now access the licence to three parenting interventions to help you with the advice and support needed to strengthen your relationship in the home and manage conflict better, and to help if you are separating or separated to understand how conflict can affect the child.

	Me, You and Baby Too	Arguing Better	Getting it Right for Children
Who it's for	New and expectant parents.	Parents who want to learn healthy ways to cope with stress.	Separating or separated parents experiencing high levels of conflict.
What you'll learn	What babies pick up from you, even before they are born. Why stress should be a shared burden. How you and your partner can best support each other. How to talk to bring up difficult topics. How arguments start, and how to stop them.	Where stress comes from and how it can affect you. The impact of stress on your family and relationship. How to support each other during stressful times. The best way to talk about problems so that you can find solutions together.	How stay calm and listen as well as talk. Why it's helpful to see things from a different point of view. What to do to stop a discussion from turning into an argument. Skills for finding solutions and making compromises.
Content	Changes for me and us. Coping with stress. Conflict and communication.	Understanding stress. Coping with stress together. Arguing better.	Stay calm. See it differently. Negotiate. Work it out.
Where to find it	www.oneplusone.org.uk/parent-guide-wales		

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RHIENI

Mae cael perthnasoedd cefnogol ac adeiladol yn bwysicach nag erioed. Gallwch nawr gael mynediad i'r drwydded ar gyfer tair ymyrraeth rhianta i'ch helpu gyda'r cyngor ar cymorth sydd eu hangen i gryfhau'ch perthynas yn y cartref a rheoli gwrthdaro'n well, ac i helpu os ydych chi'n gwahanu neu wedi gwahanu i ddeall sut y gall gwrthdaro effeithio ar y plentyn.

	Me, You and Baby Too	Arguing Better	Getting it Right for Children
Ar gyfer pwy mae e	Rhieni newydd a darpar rieni.	Rhieni sydd eisau dysgu ffyrdd iach o ymdopi â straen.	Rhieni sydd yn gwahanu neu wedi gwahanu sydd am gyfathrebu'n well er lles eu plant.
Beth fyddwch chi'n ei ddysgu	Yr hyn y mae babis yn ei synhwyro oddi wrthydd chi, hyd yn oed cyn iddyn nhw gael eu geni. Pam y dylai straen fod yn faich a renir. Y ffordd orau i chi a'ch partner gefnogi eich gilydd. Sut i siarad er mwyn codi pynciau anodd. Sut mae dadleuon yn dechrau, a sut i'w hatal.	O ble mae straen yn dod a sut mae'n gallu effeithio arnoch chi. Effaith straen ar eich teulu a'ch perthynas. Sut i gefnogi ei gilydd yn ystod cyfnodau llawn straen. Y ffordd orau o siarad am broblemau fel y gallwch chi ddod o hyd i atebion gyda'ch gilydd.	Sut i gadw'ch pen a gwrando yn ogystal â siarad. Pam mae'n ddefnyddiol gweld pethau o safbwynt gwahanol. Beth i'w wneud i atal trafodaeth rhag troi'n ddadl. Sgiliau ar gyfer dod o hyd i atebion a chyfaddawdu.
Cynnwys	Newidiadau i fi a ni. Ymdopi â straen. Gwrthdaro a chyfathrebu.	Deall straen. Ymdopi â straen gyda'ch gilydd. Dadlau'n well.	Pwyllo. Gweld pethau'n wahanol. Negodi. Gweithio pethau allan.
Ble i ddod o hyd iddo	www.oneplusone.org.uk/parent-guide-wales		

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PARENTING PRACTITIONERS

Having constructive, supportive relationships has never been as important as it is right now. You can now access the licence to three parenting interventions to help parents you work with, with the advice and support needed to strengthen relationships in the home and manage their conflict better, and to help separating and separated parents to understand how conflict can affect the child.

	Me, You and Baby Too	Arguing Better	Getting it Right for Children
Audience	New and expectant parents – targeted or universal.	Parents experiencing high levels of stress and couple conflict.	Separating or separated parents experiencing high levels of conflict.
Objectives for parents	To help new and expectant parents adapt to the changes that parenthood can have on their relationship. To raise awareness of the impact of stress and conflict on their baby. To support parents to develop skills to manage conflict constructively.	To raise awareness of parental conflict and its impact on children. To increase parents' capacity to cope with stress together. To support parents to develop skills to manage their conflict more constructively.	To help separating and separated parents to stop putting their children in the middle of their conflict. To raise awareness of how and why their child gets put in the middle. To learn and practise the skills that will prevent this. To get beyond impasses and work to solve problems together.
Content	Changes for me and us. Coping with stress. Conflict and communication.	Understanding stress. Coping with stress together. Arguing better.	Stay calm. See it differently. Negotiate. Work it out.
Where to find it	www.oneplusone.org.uk/practitioner-guides/intro#share		

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YMARFERWYR RHIAENTA

Mae perthnasoedd cefnogol ac adeiladol yn bwysicach nag erioed ar hyn o bryd. Gallwch nawr gael mynediad i'r drwydded ar gyfer tair ymyrraeth rhianta i'ch helpu rhieni rydych chi'n gweithio gyda nhw, gyda'r cyngor a'r cymorth sydd eu hangen i gryfhau perthnasoedd yn y cartref a rheoli eu gwrthdaro'n well, ac i helpu rhieni sy'n gwahanu neu sydd wedi gwahanu i ddeall sut y gall gwrthdaro effeithio ar y plentyn.

	Me, You and Baby Too	Arguing Better	Getting it Right for Children
Cynulleidfda	Rhieni newydd a darpar rieni – wedi'u targedu neu gyffredinol.	Rhieni sy'n profi lefelau uchel o straen a gwrthdaro fel cwpl.	Rhieni sy'n gwahanu neu sydd wedi gwahanu sy'n profi lefelau uchel o wrthdaro.
Amcanion i rieni	Helpu rhieni newydd a darpar rieni i addasu i'r newidiadau y gall bod yn riant eu gwneud i'w perthynas. Codi ymwybyddiaeth o effaith straen a gwrthdaro ar eu babi. Cynorthwyo rhieni i ddatblygu sgiliau i reoli eu gwrthdaro'n adeiladol.	Codi ymwybyddiaeth o wrthdaro rhwng rhieni a'i effaith ar blant. Cynyddu gallu rhieni i ymdopi â straen gyda'i gilydd. Cynorthwyo rhieni i ddatblygu sgiliau i reoli eu gwrthdaro'n fwy adeiladol.	Helpu rhieni sy'n gwahanu ac sydd wedi gwahanu i roi'r gorau i roi eu plant yng nghanol eu gwrthdaro. Codi ymwybyddiaeth o sut a pham mae eu plentyn yn cael ei roi yn y canol. Dysgu ac ymarfer y sgiliau a fydd yn atal hyn. Mynd y tu hwnt i sefyllfaoedd lle mae'r naill ochr yn gwrthod ildio a gweithio i ddatrys problemau gyda'i gilydd.
Cynnwys	Newidiadau i fi a ni. Ymdopi â straen. Gwrthdaro a chyfathrebu.	Deall straen. Ymdopi â straen gyda'ch gilydd. Dadlau'n well.	Pwyllo. Gweld pethau'n wahanol. Negodi. Gweithio pethau allan.
Ble i ddod o hyd iddo	www.oneplusone.org.uk/practitioner-guides/intro#share		

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APPENDIX D

Theory of change

RATIONALE / NEED FOR INTERVENTION

Parental conflict is damaging for children's outcomes in the short, medium, and long term. This does not matter whether the parents are in an intact relationship or separated.

Inability to cope with stress either individually or as a couple/ parent dyad can lead to increased conflict situations and has a negative impact on relationship functioning and on individual mental health, as well as child outcomes.

Raising awareness of these issues, as well as supporting people to develop constructive conflict and communication skills is vital for managing stress and reducing the negative impact of conflict on individuals, couples, families, and ultimately children.

IMPACTS

- 1.Reductions in parental conflict (intact and separated).
- 2.Improved individual and/ or dyadic coping.
- 3.Improved conflict and communication skills.
- 4.Improved relational capability.
- 5.Improved wellbeing for individuals, couples, families, and ultimately children.

THEORY OF CHANGE

- 1 Conflict within a dyad, whether intact or separated (eg, parents), has a negative impact on the people within that dyad, their wider social circle, and importantly on any children that may be involved. Stress and poor coping are often associated with conflict, as well as limited conflict and communication skills.
- 2 All three resources act to increase a dyads ability to cope with stressors individually and/ or dyadically, to raise awareness of the negative impact of conflict on self, relationship, and/ or children, and demonstrates effective conflict and communication skills that will ultimately reduce conflict within the dyad.

INPUTS

- 1 The key resource for the project will be OPO staff and practitioners in Wales. OPO staff will: a) modify three existing OPO digital resources (MYBT, GIRFC, CwS), b) develop and deliver TTT training for frontline practitioners, c) develop practitioner TTT handbook and practitioner guide for using the resources with parents, and d) evaluate the project and report on the findings. Practitioners will: a) attend the TTT and disseminate this training to other staff in their LA, and b) use one or multiple of the digital resources with parents, either through signposting or direct use (eg, blended practice).

ACTIVITIES

- 1 3 TTT sessions offered to 41 practitioners across 22 LAs in Wales.
- 2 Adaptation of three existing OPO digital resources – GIRFC, MYBT, and CwS and putting these onto skills.opo
- 3 Development of practitioner TTT handbooks for training dissemination.
- 4 Development of practitioner guidebook on how to use the three resources with parents.

OUTPUTS

- 1 Frontline practitioners from 22 LAs trained through Train the Trainer and how to use the digital resources.
- 2 Three digital resources for parents at different stages in their relationships.
- 3 Evaluation reports – quarterly and final.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Frontline practitioner training will increase practitioner's capacity to identify and support relationships, whether intact or separated, where conflict is an issue.
- 2 The digital resources will raise user's awareness about the impact of stress and conflict on their relationship and/ or on their children.
- 3 The digital resources will support parents and/ or couples to cope with stress and develop constructive conflict and communication skills.
- 4 Digital toolkit for practitioners to embed in their existing practice.

ENABLING FACTORS/CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

- 1 Buy in from frontline practitioners to attend training and either signpost their service users to the digital platforms or use them alongside service users.
- 2 Ensuring consistency through training.
- 3 Service users having access to devices and data, to access the digital resources.
- 4 Intrinsic motivation from service users.
- 5 Management within LAs supporting staff to use the resources with parents.

APPENDIX E

Evaluation plan

	Getting it right for children	Me, You and Baby Too	Arguing better
Specific research questions	Is <i>Getting it Right for Children</i> effective in reducing co-parenting conflict and improving EARD?	Is <i>Me, You and Baby Too</i> effective in reducing parental conflict and increasing dyadic coping?	Is <i>Arguing better</i> effective in reducing parent stress and increasing dyadic coping?
Broader research questions	How are the resources being rolled out across the 22 local authorities in Wales? Is there a more or less effective approach to the rollout of the digital resources? Is there a relationship between type of practitioner training (eg, early intervention, statutory services) and parents' engagement? Do demographic features influence the impact of the resource?		
Resource specific data	Pre-post questionnaires: <i>DWP co-parenting conflict sub-scale; EARDA.</i>	Pre-post questionnaires: <i>CSI-4; DCI (support subscale); DWP parental conflict (intact parents subscale).</i>	Pre-post questionnaires: <i>PSS-4; DCI (support subscale).</i>
Common data	Quantitative analytics data. Qualitative semi-structured interview data with parents and practitioners. Qualitative focus group data.		
What are we measuring? (Intermediate)	Intermediary comms with practitioners on a monthly basis. Engagement with resource (time spent on resource; videos watched; clicking out to other resources) Usability – to uncover blockers, accessibility problems, or general usage issues.		
What are we measuring? (Overall)	The impact of the resource on parents' co-parenting conflict and EARD.	The impact of the resource on couples' conflict levels, relationship satisfaction, and dyadic coping.	The impact of the resource on the users' stress and dyadic coping skills.
What are we measuring? (Common overall evidence)	Engagement with the resource. Parents' use of the conflict and communication skills demonstrated in the resource. How practitioners use the resource with parents (including barriers and facilitators). The experiences of practitioners having access to the resources, and the impact of this. Whether users go through the resource together, and the impact of this.		
What will the evidence look like?	Significant difference between pre- and post-resource questionnaires. Sufficient time spent viewing the resource. Parents discussing use of the skills in interviews. Practitioners discussing impact of resource on parents. Practitioners discussing use of resources and the impact on their practice, including barriers and facilitators. Correlations between rollout approach and user engagement.		
How will we collect it? (method)	Analysing metrics from the Thinkific database, Google Analytics, and GTM (event listening). Use of Typeform. Pre- and post-resource questionnaire data. Semi-structured interviews. Focus groups and monthly interviews with practitioners.		

APPENDIX F

Semi-structured interviews topic guide example (*Getting it right for children*)

Parent interview

Introduction to the interview

- Interviewer name, role.
- Description of the project – funders and who is involved.
- What the interview is about.
- Assurances re how the data will be used, confidentiality, and consent to recording.

Background information

“Tell me about yourself”

- Age
- Relationships situation
- How long have you been together/ separated?
- Living circumstances?
- Any children? How old are your children?
- What sex are they?
- Relationship between the children and partner?

Getting it right for children resource

How did you hear about the programme?

[**probe:** Who suggested you do it? Why? Did they discuss their referral with the practitioner?]

How did you access the resource?

[**probe:** Did you view it on your own? Did a practitioner go through it with you? Did you attend a group session? Remote, face-to-face?]

What did you think about being referred?

[**probe:** If understood why being referred? Whether felt it was appropriate? What thought about an online tool?]

What did you hope to get out of using *Getting it right for children*?

Using Getting it right for children resource

How did you find using GIRFC?

What parts did you like? Why?

What parts didn't you like? Why?

[**probe**: thoughts on each section]

- Tom's family
- Mia
- Josh
- Ellie and Jake

Do you have any suggestions for how it could be improved?

Involvement of ex-partner

Has your ex-partner been using GIRFC?

Any discussion about the resource? Shared any videos?

Involvement of referrer

[How] Has the person who recommended the videos to you been involved in any other way?

[**probe**: If professional followed up on whether being used? Looked at any of the programme with parent? Made any additional referrals? Or suggested other resources? What was their FSW involvement before?]

Probe Covid-19

- Any face-to-face sessions?
- If digital only, what kind of contact did you have with your practitioner?
 - How regular?
 - Format?
 - Availability of practitioner?
 - Comparison to F2F work they had done together, if any?

Learning

What are the main things that you learnt from the programme?

What was most useful? Why?

What was least useful? Why?

Implementing what learnt

How have you found putting what you have learnt into practice?

- What things helped you to do that? Within the programme? In your own life?
- What is hard about putting it into practice? Within the programme? In your own life?
[eg, **probe**: amount of time you need to do it? partner not interested, don't know how ...]

What difference has doing the programme made ...?

[probe: to you? To your relationship with your ex-partner? To co-parenting? To your children?]

Have you talked to anyone else about the issues it covers since doing the programme?

[probe: Who? What aspects? Why?]

What other help would you find useful in dealing with issues it covers?

[probe: Who? What aspects? Why?]

Where could you go for help?

APPENDIX G

Semi-structured interviews consent form example (*Getting it right for children*)

Consent form

The interview

We would like to understand whether our *Getting it right for children* digital resource helped parents to deal with stress and improve their co-parenting. As you have used *Getting it right for children*, we would like to speak to you about your experiences of using it. As a thank you for taking part, we would like to offer you a £20 Amazon voucher.

If you are worried about any of the things we talk about today, you can contact your GP for further support.

How we would like to use your interview

We are interviewing a number of parents who have used *Getting it right for children* to help us understand peoples' experience of using the resource. We will analyse the interviews and use the findings to write an evaluation report for the Welsh government who funded the research.

All data we collect will be anonymised prior to analysis, and no one will be identifiable from their answers in any publications, but we might want to use the information you give us as a case study for publication online.

How we store your data and for how long

We keep a complete policy that explains our data handling processes in detail. In this policy, we outline how we process all research data, including recorded audio interviews – which a staff member at OnePlusOne will happily discuss upon request. In summary, all data can only be accessed by members of the research team at OnePlusOne and will only be shared for transcription purposes. These audio recordings fall into the permanent preservation category and will be transferred to an archive after seven years from project completion. However, participants are able to request that their data is deleted at any time and when this data is deleted it must be non-recoverable. All data, audio, and transcriptions, will be stored on secure servers in the UK.

Please read and tick the following statements. You don't have to agree to share everything with us – only tick the boxes below that you are happy to participate in.

- ☐ I agree to take part in an interview with OnePlusOne.
- ☐ I agree to this interview being recorded.
- ☐ I agree to this interview being transcribed by a third-party transcription service.
- ☐ I agree to OnePlusOne keeping my details in their secure database for seven years in line with data protection regulations.
- ☐ I agree to my story / experience being used in the ways described above.
- ☐ I agree to OnePlusOne contacting me in future, only about this research.
- ☐ I understand that I am free to withdraw from the interview at any time without having to say why.
- ☐ I understand that I am free to withdraw my data at any time by contacting:
privacy@oneplusone.org.uk

APPENDIX H

Parent interview demographics

	Gender	Age	Relationship	Resource	Found
P1	Female	29	Separated	Getting it right for children	FS support worker
P2	Female	35	Separated	Getting it right for children	Flying start
P3	Female	20	Separated	Arguing better	Midwife
P4	Female	32	Separated	Getting it right for children	FS Facebook
P5	Female	39	Living with partner	Arguing Better	Work
P6	Female	41	Married	Arguing better	FS support worker
P7	Female	32	Married	Me, You and Baby Too	School email
P8	Female	41	Separated	Getting it right for children	Social work
P9	Female	33	Separated	Getting it right for children	FS Facebook
P10	Male	35	Separated	Getting it right for children	Support worker
P11	Female	40	Separated	Getting it right for children	Support worker
P12	Male	34	Separated	Getting it right for children	FS social worker
P13	Male	44	Married	Arguing better	School email
P14	Male	41	Married	Arguing better	Parent nurturing course
P15	Female	24	Living with partner	Me, You and Baby Too	FIS
P16	Female		Married	Me, You and Baby Too	Family member
P17	Female	40	Separated	Getting it right for children	FIS

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