Session 2 / Séance plénière 2
Policy and Practice in Early Years Services and Child Protection
Services à la petite enfance et protection de l'enfance : cadre politique et bonnes pratiques
Policy and Practice in Early Years Services and Child Protection in the UK

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ESN Autumn seminar 2011

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Early years- Poverty and Child protection

• Clear link between children’s achievement and poverty. The gap in achievement for these children is evident when they start pre-school.

• Whilst child protection issues can occur in all kinds of families, poverty is a stress upon good parenting. Infants and pre-school children are less visible to child protection or universal services.

• How to link universal and targeted services for better outcomes for children.
Who funds and provides early years and child protection services?

- Department for Education funds each Local Authority to provide these services through a combination of per capita funding and specific revenue grants based on demographic profiles.

- Spending cuts are estimated to reduce overall budgets by 12% in 2011.

- The Coalition Government emphasises ‘localism’ and, therefore, local discretion on spending.
Who funds and provides early years and child protection services?

• The Government requires Local Authorities to provide educational and support services that address the gaps in achievement between different groups of children and improve outcomes for all children and reduce inequalities.

• Director of Children’s Services (within the Local Authority) has responsibility for ensuring that a local authority meets their specific duties to organise and plan services and to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

• Local Safeguarding Children’s Board is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in each local area co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in that locality.
Assessing well-being and risk
Assessing Risk

Reported to and led by LA children’s social work service:

• Initial assessment
• Core assessment
• Strategy discussion
• S47 referral to police
• Child in Need/Child protection plan
Legal Powers

A local authority makes an application to the courts for an order to safeguard the welfare of a child:

- care orders
- supervision orders
- emergency protection orders
- secure accommodation orders.
Serious case reviews

• Local Safeguarding Children’s Boards (LSCBs) are required to undertake a serious case review in the event of death or serious harm
• Government produces biennial Overviews
• Move towards ‘systems approach’ to provide a review methodology (SCIE’s *Learning Together* model)
Review and change

- Social Work Reform Board
- Munro Review of child protection
- Family Justice Review

"The family justice system mustn't second guess the professional opinions of social workers who have seen what's happening on the ground and who find their professional judgement undermined by judges who do not have anything like the grass roots frontline experience of social workers."

Michael Gove Sec State for Education October 2011
Local practice example:
Early Notification of Pregnancy, Lancashire

- Lancashire Serious Case Review Panel, identified high numbers of infant deaths or injuries

- How to work together with vulnerable parents-to-be (especially those deemed to be vulnerable) in the early stages of pregnancy?

- With mother’s permission *Early Notification* by midwife at the booking appointment, to children's centre, for centre to contact her.

- April – August 2009 - 430 Early Notifications were received in one locality, which have been distributed to 16 different Children's Centres

- Families report feeling better supported and able to access services available in the Children's Centres
Local practice example: 
Early Notification of Pregnancy, Lancashire

- Midwives report being able to concentrate more on the clinical aspects of their role, with Children's Centres providing additional social support in the care of the mother and baby
- Widespread increase in communication between the Midwifery, Children’s Centres and Health Visiting services. Furthermore, there is an enhanced opportunity for information sharing to best meet the needs of the family
- From October 2009, 21 antenatal booking clinics commenced across community venues in central Lancashire, 16 of which are in Children's Centres, resulting in 64 hours of midwifery time delivered in Children's Centres
- [Early Notification of Pregnancy, Lancashire](#)
Final comments

• Research on early intervention; universal & specialist services coming into practice
• Focus on raising and sustaining calibre of social work and family courts
• Coalition Government emphasis on localism
• Fiscal pressures