

# Pan-Sussex Safeguarding Children Conference Summary Report

Child Neglect and Co-existing Factors  
29 November 2023



East Sussex  
Safeguarding  
Children  
Partnership



# Introduction

The Pan-Sussex Conference Planning Group were very pleased to have two expert speakers agree to join the conference this year, both brought a wealth of knowledge and experience. First, we had a presentation covering trauma informed perspective on assessing parents' capacity to parent and meet their children's needs, and how we as professionals 'assess' that capacity. We also looked at the 'why' neglect might be happening rather than just 'what' is happening. Understanding the parents' journeys to best understand the child's lived experiences; and how to best help families. These presentations were delivered by Dr Tracee Green and Dr Sheena Webb.

The facilitated workshops were used to explore different indicators of neglect and unpick some of the complexities. We encouraged active participation from delegates, examples from practice and reflection on how we might do things differently going forward. The Learning and Development team recorded the sessions, so all delegates were reminded to be mindful of confidentiality during discussions.. This Summary Report details the content of the conference and provides a summary of the evaluation data and feedback from delegates.

## Attendance

The conference was delivered virtually via MS Teams. Bookings were managed via Eventbrite. The event 'sold out' on Eventbrite in a few days (250 places); we managed additional requests from Pan-Sussex partners via a waiting list managed by BHSCP Business Team.

All professionals added to the waiting list were offered places, attendance on the day totalled – 185 including Speakers, facilitators, and members of the Pan-Sussex Business Teams supporting the event online.

Due to the number of delegates attending, places for the facilitated workshops were allocated as 'Breakout Rooms' on the day of the conference by the Pan-Sussex Learning & Development Officers/Consultants. Each Breakout Room was recorded, and these recordings will be made available to delegates after the event through the secure Pan-Sussex YouTube platforms. A resources bundle will include pdf versions of the presentations from Dr Tracee Green and Dr Sheena Webb.

## Evaluation

The Survey Monkey evaluation link was shared via MS Teams 'Chat' at start of the conference and during the closing slides towards the end of conference. The link will also be shared to all delegates on the attendance register by the BHSCP Business Team post conference. We had received 44 responses (27% of delegates) at the time of writing this report.

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/YRJRGH>

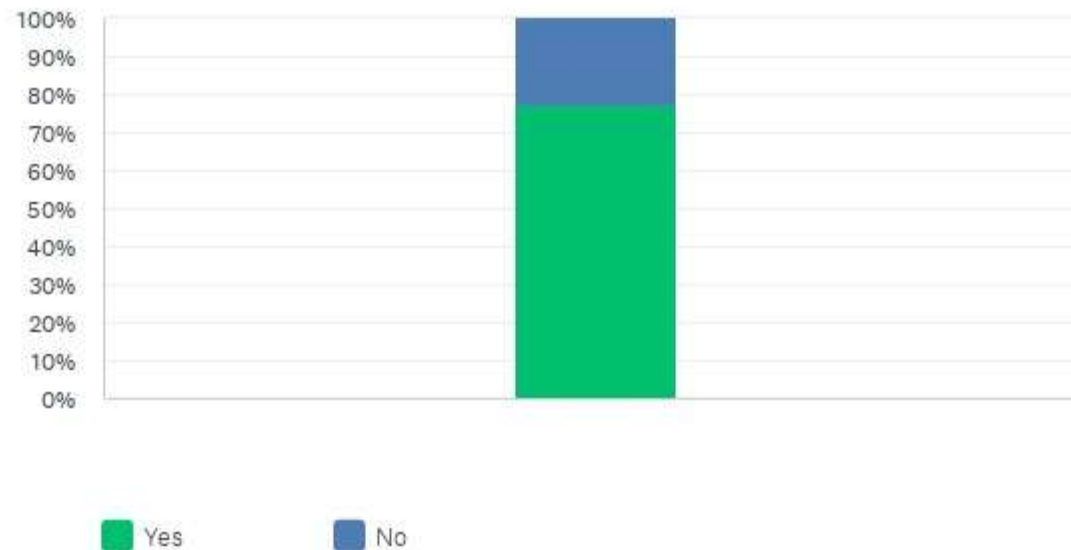
# Conference Plan

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Time	Item	Lead
9.30 – 9.35	The Agenda and Housekeeping	Chris Robson
9.35 – 9.45	Welcome to the Pan-Sussex Safeguarding Children Conference	Chris Robson
9.45 – 10.15	<i>Neglect in the context of parenting assessments &amp; parenting capacity.</i>	Dr Tracee Green
10.15 – 10.30	Q & A with Dr Tracee Green	All
10.30 – 10.45	Break	
10.45 – 11.10	Activity: Facilitated Workshops – Breakout Rooms <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <i>Neglect of Health Needs.</i></li><li>○ <i>Neglect and its co-existence with sexual harm.</i></li><li>○ <i>Neglect and its relationship with economic disadvantage.</i></li><li>○ <i>Neglect and home educated children.</i></li></ul>	Facilitators – Dr Tracey Ward & Louise Jackson Dr Jamie Carter & Jenny Whyte Nicola McGeown, Emma Gilbert & Susan Pierce Andy Parker, Katie Bennett & Gail Woodward
10.10 – 11.30	Feedback from the Workshops	Led by the Facilitators
11.30 – 12.15	<i>Trauma Informed Assessment of Neglect experienced by children, young people, and within families.</i>	Dr Sheena Webb
12.15 – 12.30	Q & A with Dr Sheena Webb	All
12.30 – 12.40	Thank you and Closing Address	Naomi Ellis and DCI Jon Gillings
12.45	Conference Close	

# Conference Evaluation

Q1 Were you aware of the Pan-Sussex neglect procedures prior to attending this event?



77% Yes 23% No

## Neglect in the Context of Parenting Assessments & Parenting Capacity



Delivered by Dr Tracee Green, Head of the Centre for Child Protection and Reader in Child Protection and Social Work at the University of Kent.

Dr Green has been involved with the Centre for Child Protection since 2016 by way of teaching MA in Advanced Child Protection and related programmes delivering training with innovative simulations, developing projects to support child protection learning and undertaking research to further the field of safeguarding knowledge and education.

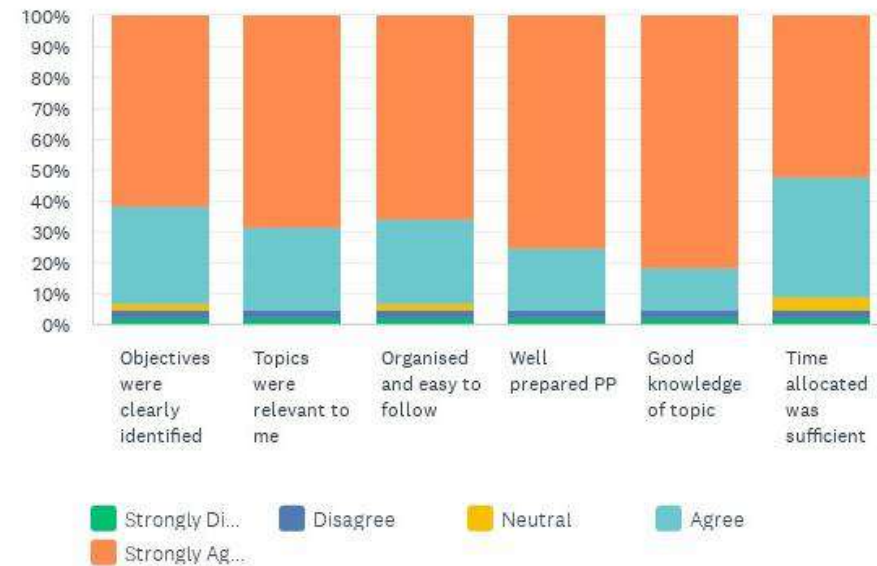
[Dr Tracee Green - Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research - University of Kent](#)

## A New Look at Parenting and Neglect: Understanding the Impact of Trauma

Topics covered:

- What is 'Good' parenting and what is 'Bad' parenting.
- Styles of parenting – High/Low Responsiveness and High/Low Demandingness.
- The 'Good', the 'Bad', and the 'Good Enough'.
- Why does a parent 'parent' the way they do?
- Impact of neglect and abuse on children.
- Prevalence and Consequences of Neglect.
- Risk Factors of Neglect.
- How to work more effectively with neglect.
- Are we looking in the wrong place at the wrong things?
- Trauma, Trauma Based Diagnoses – PTSD and Complex PTSD, understanding Brain Development and Stress, Fight or Flight, Freeze and Feigned Death.
- Developmental Trauma.
- Plasticity.
- Impact of Stress and Distress, Toxic Stress and Adverse Childhood Experiences.
- Why do we need to understand these concepts in Child Protection?
- How does Trauma Impact on Parenting?

## Q2 Neglect in the Context of Parenting Assessments & Parenting Capacity



### Range of Responses Across All Questions

Strongly Agree 52% - 81%

Agree 14% - 38%

Neutral 2% - 4%

Disagree 2%

Strongly Disagree 2%

# Activity: Facilitated Breakout Rooms

## Activity: Facilitated Breakout Rooms

*Neglect of Health Needs*

*Neglect and its co-existence with sexual harm.*

*Neglect and its relationship with economic disadvantage.*

*Neglect and home educated children.*

## Facilitators –

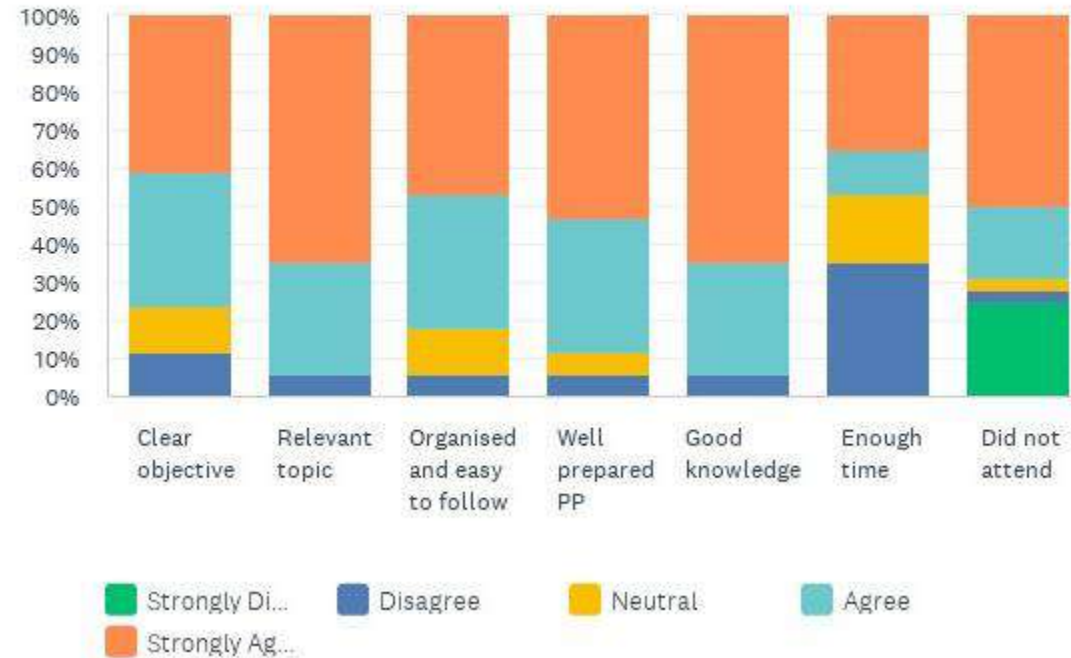
Dr Tracey Ward & Louise Jackson

Dr Jamie Carter & Jenny Whyte

Nicola McGeown, Emma Gilbert & Susan Pierce

Andy Parker, Katie Bennett & Gail Woodward

## Q3 Neglect of Health Needs (Breakout Room)



### Range of Responses Across all Questions (not including 'Did not attend')

Strongly Agree 35% - 65%

Agree 12% - 35%

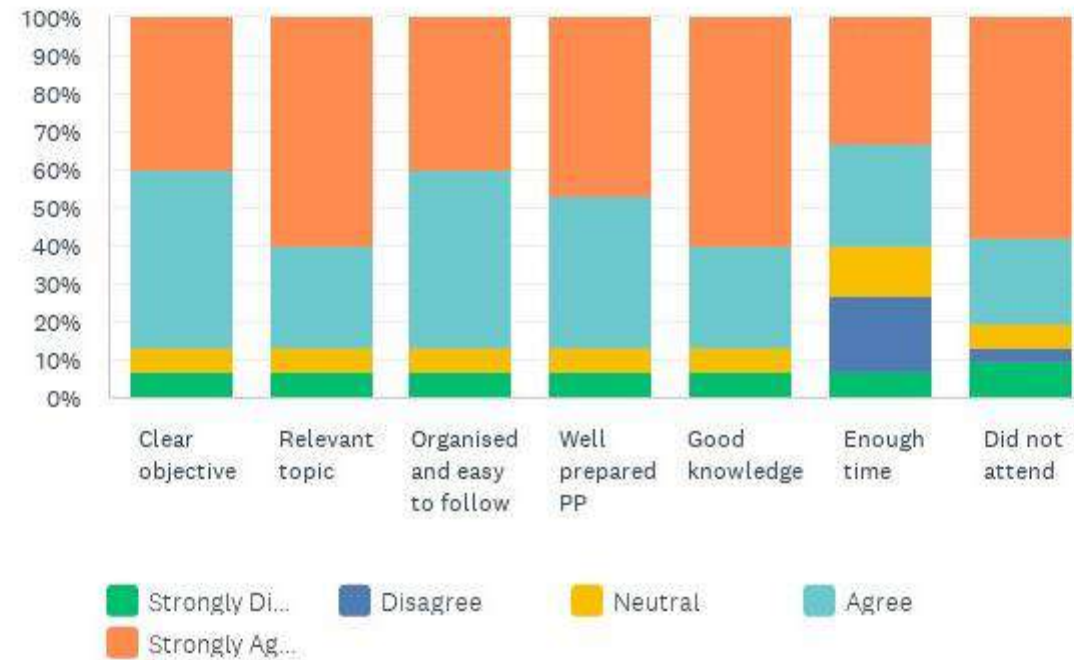
Neutral 6% - 18%

Disagree 6% - 12%

Strongly Disagree 0%



## Q4 Neglect and its Co-existence with Sexual Harm (Breakout Room)



### Range of Responses Across all Questions (not including 'Did not attend')

Strongly Agree 33% - 60%

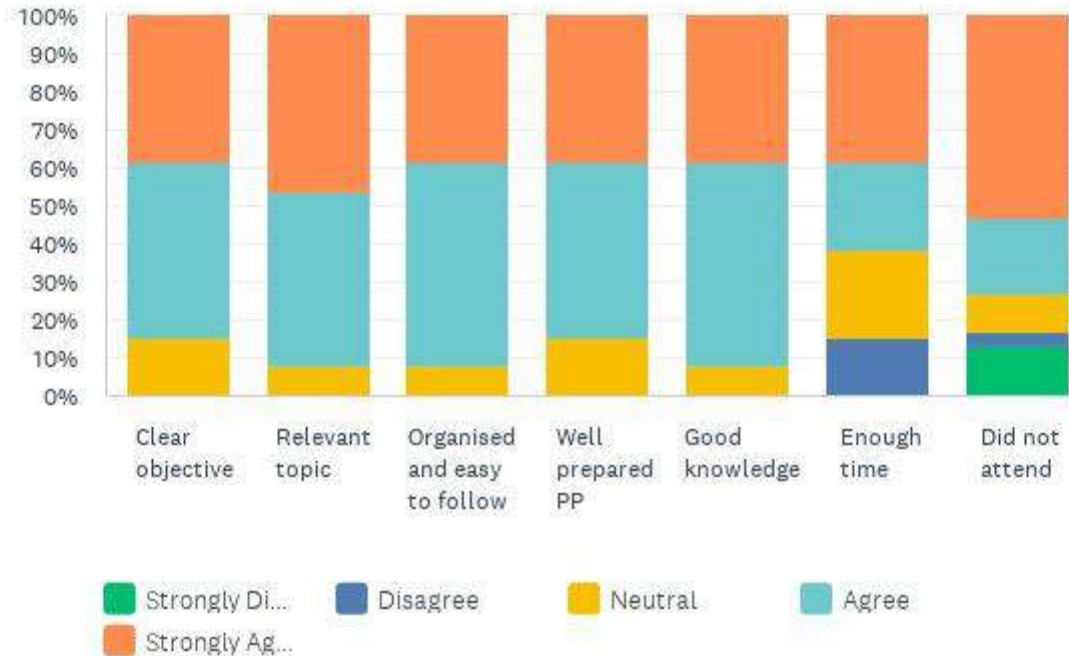
Agree 27% - 47%

Neutral 7% - 13%

Disagree 20% (\*enough time in Breakout Rooms)

Strongly Disagree 7%

## Q5 Neglect and its Relationship with Economic Disadvantage (Breakout Room)



### Range of Responses Across all Questions (not including 'Did not attend')

Strongly Agree 39% - 47%

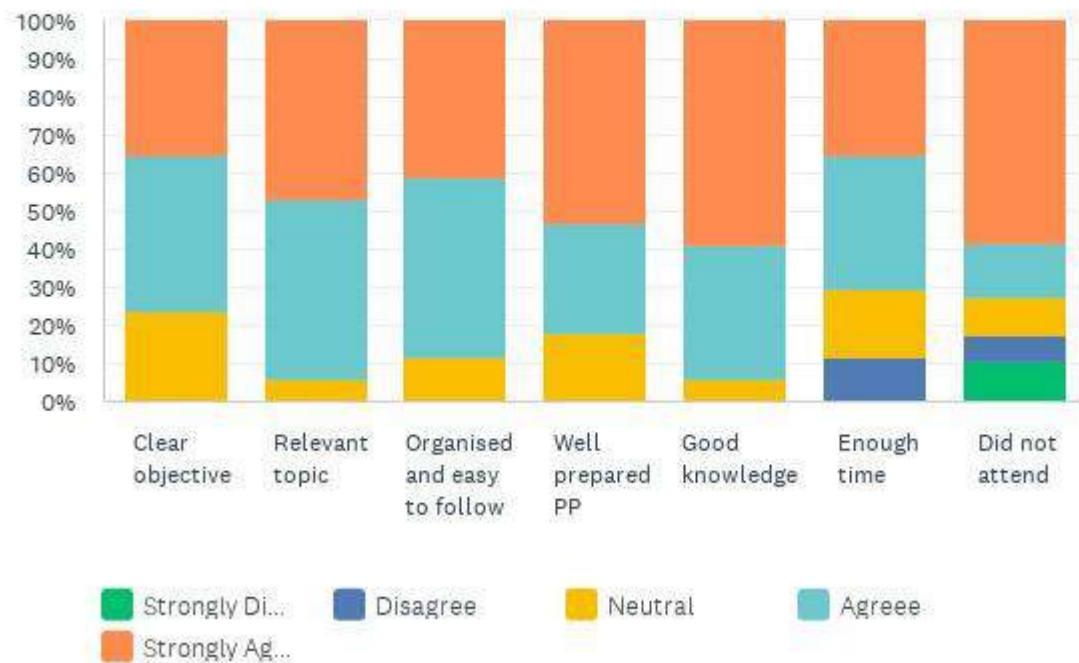
Agree 23% - 47%

Neutral 7% - 23%

Disagree 15%

Strongly Disagree 0%

## Q6 Neglect and Home Educated Children (Breakout Room)



### Range of Responses Across all Questions (not including 'Did not attend')

Strongly Agree 35% - 59%

Agree 29% - 47%

Neutral 6% - 24%

Disagree 12% (\*enough time in Breakout Rooms)

Strongly Disagree 0%

## Trauma Informed Assessment of Neglect Experienced by Children, Young People, and Within Families.

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Delivered by Dr Sheena Webb, Consultant Clinical Psychologist specialising in children, adolescents & families with complex needs.

Dr Webb qualified at the Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London in 2003. Since then, Dr Webb has worked in a range of NHS settings, mainly specialising in young people and families with complex needs. Dr Webb still works within the NHS as part of a specialist assessment and treatment team for high-risk families.

As Joint Clinical Lead for Pan-London Family Drug and Alcohol Court , Dr Webb is interested in Trauma Informed Practice in the family courts.

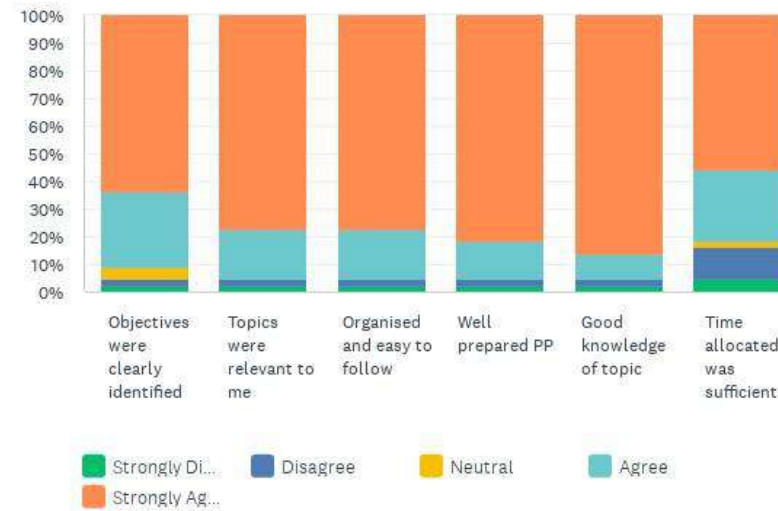
[Dr. Sheena Webb \(asanahealth.co.uk\)](http://asanahealth.co.uk)

## Assessing Parents and Children who have Experienced Neglect

### Topics Covered –

- Defining Impact.
- Dimensions of Trauma.
- Neglect – Exposure to Distress, Impact on Development.
- Attachment.
- How Chronic Neglect Impacts.
- What the Nature and Degree of Impact Depends on.
- Window of Tolerance.
- Problems in the System.
- Complications to Assessment.
- Unpacking Neglect.
- Trauma Informed Approach to Assessment – understanding trauma, understanding the consumer survivor, understanding services, understanding the service relationship.
- How Being Trauma Informed is not About Telling People they have been Traumatized.
- Establishing Foundations of Regulation First.
- Core Beliefs: What we learn from.
- Finding Alternatives.
- Deconstructing 'Poor Engagement'.
- Seeing Past the Bodyguards.
- Trauma Informed Formulations.
- Recovery from Complex Trauma in Children (and in Adults).

## Q7 Trauma Informed Assessment of Neglect Experienced by Children, Young People, and Within Families.



### Range of Responses Across All Questions

Strongly Agree 64% - 86%

Agree 9% - 27%

Neutral 2% - 5%

Disagree 2% - 12%

Strongly Disagree 2% - 5%

## Q8 What learning from this event will be useful for your agency?

- 'Neglect multi-dimensional/complex, look for the subtle. Being trauma informed. Physiological/neurological effects trauma. Signs of trauma/displayed behaviors. MDT/collaborative working.'
- 'Better understanding of non-engagement and perhaps why and what that might look like. Working with chronic neglect through the lens of past traumas and then using this to formulate meaningful plans that hopefully create significant and sustained change. Thinking about the use of language in recordings and each record person centred rather than case centred.'
- 'The importance of respectful curiosity to better understand the stories people create about themselves, others, and the world around them... Ecological perspective and social justice lens to appreciate the importance of environmental factors including - for example, policy decisions that reinforce unhelpful, stigmatising dominant narratives that stigmatise and marginalise. Small acts in the everyday that can contribute to a big difference. We should all mind our language. Adopting inclusive, restorative language, writing to the person/family...'
- 'How the impact of trauma has a wider context and sometimes needing to look further than the child in our care.'
- 'I will encourage colleagues to consider the trauma informed approach when thinking about medical presentations. I also think there is a lot of information to include in medical reports to support the impact of neglect on children and their families.'
- 'Reframing thoughts - why is this person behaving in this way?'
- 'Trauma informed approach and understanding the impact of trauma on parenting- non blaming for own trauma.'
- 'The difficulty in assessing trauma presentations and the system directives that are prioritised above this.'
- 'Remaining trauma informed and mindful of family behaviours, to help understand and engage with families.'
- 'How to engage with families that have experienced trauma.'
- 'As a DSL and support worker in the voluntary sector we see most of the issues raised during this morning. It was good to hear in the feedback how economic disadvantage is being considered and recognition that for many families neglect in terms of food, clothing etc. is not a choice.'
- 'I am a nursery manager... We work in partnership with the Family Hubs and many families who use our service have complex needs. We find it difficult to engage with services and to refer families for the support they need but this has given me the confidence to beat our drums louder and make services engage with these families (many of which are closed to services due to lack of engagement which is beyond frustrating.'
- 'All of it - particularly home schooling was relevant as I have a case this applies to.'
- 'The interplay of neglect in a family that is bereaved. How is this addressed sensitively at a time of trauma.'

## Q9 What key messages from this event will you share with your agency?

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- '...previous trauma in person is important. Those that live in neglect are 5x increased risk of child sexual abuse. Always maintain a professional curiosity.'
- 'Professional curiosity: Report when concerned as someone else might have same thoughts - build the picture.'
- 'What factors/experience impact on parenting, rephrasing perceptions. Unconscious bias of parental behaviours & do they understand their behaviours are neglect, and not presume they are equipped to do this based on their own experiences.'
- 'How trauma from neglect has a bigger impact and how this could present through parents, not just the child.'
- 'The use of language with regards to CP conference...'
- 'If primary experience is not having your needs met, then we should not repeat that experience.'
- 'Thinking about neglect as the iceberg image and exploring why parents may struggle with engagement due to their past personal experiences.'
- 'I am particularly keen to share clear and relevant information about avoidance ... to help them understand where and how we struggle to engage clients with further support.'
- 'THINK THE UNTHINKABLE.'
- 'The importance of acknowledging Trauma with clients and how we can help them move forward through listening and signposting.'
- 'Shift in thinking and way of working with families- keeping child as focus but working with caregivers who have experienced Trauma.'
- 'To consider trauma when making assessments and during consultations.'
- 'The voice of the child AND the journey of the parent all count. Consideration of how a meaningful trauma informed assessment really looks and where the resources would come from.'
- 'Importance of considering parental trauma and mental health and impact on parenting and child neglect child neglect biggest issue of safeguarding concern.'
- 'Some useful facts about home schooling.'
- 'How I write about families Barriers to engagement.'
- 'Why does a parent 'parents' the way they do? Complexity of child neglect.'
- 'The power of language.'

## Q10 What changes to practice will your agency make considering continued learning from the Conference?

- 'The importance of completing safeguarding forms. Communication amongst teams is paramount.'
- 'Myself & colleague neglect champions so will attempt to apply to incorporate to health and in professional scope of role. Increase awareness through education.'
- 'Reviewing through sharing the resources and reflection, how we engage with parents and any ways we could improve trauma informed practice.'
- 'Poverty proofing approach. Ecological approach that considers family in context of their environment 'Intersectional lens' including - for example, effect of racialised trauma and adaptive behaviours.'
- 'Professional curiosity to achieve greater understanding and avoid false working assumptions.'
- 'Restorative approach, working with and alongside and through our language, gestures, behaviours making space to listen, ask questions, that helps systems create the cultural shift necessary to better practice.'
- '... more open discussions with parents/carers throughout the settling in process as well as during difficult conversations needed before the talk of referrals.'
- 'Not to assume that other professionals know better. Have confidence in our concerns and don't back down!!'
- 'Professional challenge of unhelpful language when discussing young people and their carers.'
- 'Consider language and approach in report writing in child protection process.'
- 'We will reflect together on the information shared and look to where we can raise our knowledge and use it to further improve our practice.'
- 'Lower threshold for referral to other agencies.'
- 'Being aware of impact of trauma in both adults and children.'
- '... I will see, hold and respond to my families with a greater awareness of the impact of Trauma.'
- 'This will change the way I write child protection reports and decision making at conferences.'
- 'Reducing the stigma of certain behaviours parents/sibling display - reframing these in terms of their past experience and how this can be applied in practice.'
- 'Ongoing discussion around neglect assessment and how to work alongside vulnerable parents.'
- 'Encouraging the trauma informed approach despite the intense pressures on services that might lead to individuals appear less trauma informed (without meaning to).'
- 'Increase focus on emotional neglect.'
- 'Be more aware of the issues of mental health and child neglect.'
- 'Use of language around neglect.'



# Acknowledgements

Chris Robson – Pan-Sussex Independent Chair & Scrutineer

Dr Tracee Green – Speaker

Dr Sheena Webb – Speaker

Dr Tracey Ward – Workshop Facilitator and Pan-Sussex Conference Planning Group

Louise Jackson – Workshop Facilitator and Pan-Sussex Conference Planning Group

Dr Jamie Carter – Workshop Facilitator and Pan-Sussex Conference Planning Group

Jenny Whyte – Workshop Facilitator and Pan-Sussex Conference Planning Group

Jo Tomlinson – Pan-Sussex Conference Planning Group

Nicola McGeown – Workshop Facilitator

Emma Gilbert – Workshop Facilitator

Susan Pierce – Workshop Facilitator

Andy Parker – Workshop Facilitator

Katie Bennett – Workshop Facilitator

Gail Woodward – Workshop Facilitator

Naomi Ellis & DCI Jon Gillings – On behalf of the Pan-Sussex Lead Partners

Sarah Smart, Louise MacQuire-Plows, Victoria Jones, Sally Kendal – Pan-Sussex Partnership Managers

Tom Edwards, Giovanna Simpson, Lucy Short – Pan-Sussex Learning & Development Officers/Consultants

Nicky Packham – BHSCP Partnership Coordinator

PDF versions of conference presentations will be circulated to delegates with permission from Speakers and workshop facilitators.

