

C-Change Capacity to Change

Information and Training Options

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1. What is the C-Change Approach?

Capacity to Change

C-Change is a flexible approach to assessing **parents' capacities to change** where the children are in need or at risk of maltreatment. It is of interest to social workers and other practitioners working with children and families in these situations. It may be used, for example, to assist decision-making when care proceedings are being considered; in planning to reunite children who have been in care with their parent(s); and in providing support through Early Help services.

C-Change focuses specifically on parental capacity to change, with the aim of **improving practitioner skills** and better **informing** future planning and decision-making. It is designed as a complementary process, to be used alongside standard methods of assessing children and their families, such as the *Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need, Signs of Safety*, or other equivalent approaches.

There is very limited availability of good quality assessment methods for practitioners regarding parental capacity to change, and C-Change fills an important gap.

Problems it may help to address include delays in deciding to remove a child; decisions about removing a child from parents who might reasonably have been able to continue with the child's care; and working with cases that appear to be 'stuck'.

The C-Change assessment combines two essential elements, **understanding & action**.

The first involves assessing and understanding barriers and facilitators affecting the parents' attempts to change their behaviour. The second involves time-limited assessment of the parents' actions as they try to make changes (with appropriate support and intervention).

With regard to the first element, **understanding**, C-Change offers a framework of barriers to and facilitators of change drawn from behaviour change theory. The C-Change manual guides practitioners in exploring relevant issues with families, and includes a range of supporting materials. The second element, that of **action**, involves supporting parents to make real changes for the benefit of the children, and clear methods of assessment are provided to measure those changes. The technique of Goal Attainment Scaling is one such method, and provides a careful and thorough approach to setting goals and reviewing progress.

The C-Change approach guides practitioners through comparing and analysing the information gained from both elements, **understanding** and **action**, in relation to the assessed risk to the child, including consideration of the child's timescale.

Commissioners - what will this give you?

Research and serious case reviews have shown up a range of practice mistakes, including, for example, a tendency by social workers to mistake superficial parental engagement for genuine capacity to change.

Many Family Courts have also now included assessment of parents' capacities to change in their templates for court reports.

The potential for C-Change to transform social work assessments arises because a good analytical assessment, where the child is in need or at risk of maltreatment, considers three essential questions:

- whether there is harm to the child;
- whether the parents/carers are responsible for that harm; and
- whether there is capacity to change things to ensure the child is safe in the future.

Social workers have struggled for years with the last of these questions.

We believe that the C-Change approach will assist practitioners to answer this question in a considered, logical and timely manner.

The C-Change approach supports:

- Clear **thinking** and professional **judgement**
- Better **decision-making** for children, including reduced delays (which are known to be harmful); and greater coherence between assessments and decisions.
- **Improvements in the quality and accuracy** of assessments. The addition of parental capacity to change into the analysis or formulation of an assessment enables the social worker to follow a more logical analytical process.
- Increased involvement of parents in developing meaningful, manageable and measurable goals for change. This enhances the chances of parents working with the plans for their children and avoids parents feeling they have been set up to fail.
- **Improved outcomes** for children, arising from improvements in decisions themselves, and improved timeliness of decisions. The potential here is to offer the right help or intervention to children at an earlier stage, thus improving the chances that those children's needs can be addressed before it is too late developmentally.
- A **systemic change** in practice

- Greater **cost-effectiveness**, achieved largely through a reduction in repeat assessments; greater accuracy in decision-making; greater credibility of court reports and a consequent reduction in the need for expert witnesses.

We know that this training, supported through the C-Change manual creates:

- a more **confident** workforce
- better understanding of what helps and hinders behaviour change
- a more **analytical** workforce
- more **effective** ways of working with cases that seem stuck

Does it work?

The C-Change Change approach was piloted in 2014-15, and the C-Change manual was published following this experience.

Preliminary evaluation measured social workers' knowledge, skills and confidence in assessing parental capacity to change, using questionnaires applied before and after training, and at 3-month follow-up. The results included statistically significant improvements in practitioner skills, knowledge and confidence; improvements in social workers' analyses in assessments; court reports well received by judges; improved decision-making within the child's timescales, with potential avoidance of delay; and reductions in the need for expert witnesses in court proceedings (in a small number of cases). Within 3 months of the training session, 87% of participants had been able to apply the C-Change approach.

Comments from social workers participating in the evaluation included:

'It's huge. And, I think, ... although I've been practising for a long time, until I did this, you didn't actually sit down and actually think about it.'

'You might be thinking along the lines of you know this parent can't do it because there's this thing that's really getting in the way of... this barrier that's really hindering her or him, because they can't see past that. And you, kind of, know that's a problem, but then it helps you to think about why it's a problem, and what you might be able to do about it, and how big a problem is it.'

'I never ever had broken it down like that before... Never to break it down to being five domains like Habits, Automatic Responses, you know, all of those Contextual factors. I didn't have any framework to hang that on. So it's helped massively.'

'I found it really positive, actually. I suppose, when you've been doing the job for long enough, and you've had the various bits of training and experience, and put them altogether, and I felt that is what this did a bit for me. It was a bit of a personal pulling everything together, and not necessarily learning things that are completely new, but it's all the familiar things in quite a structured, helpful way.'

'... it offered a really good framework to ... cement where those concerns (about capacity to change) sat in the assessment. I think, without that sort of template, the social worker could likely find themselves stating things like "my observations led me to believe da, da, da.." which of course when you're actually in court is sometimes upheld and other times not.'

2. Training delivery options and charges

There are a range of options as to how this training could be delivered. We provide a suggestion below. **Please talk to us about your requirements and how we can support you.**

Inception/Planning meeting - We would be keen to meet with you to agree timings, understand your vision and approach and agree delivery options. We will want to understand what you are using currently for assessments, what approach you take, what is working well/less well.

We will also ask for any reports/threshold documents, internal processes etc. to make sure that we bespoke the training ensuring that it is relevant to each learner and that they can use the approach immediately afterwards.

Where C-Change materials can be made available via your internal staff information and / or recording systems, we will agree with you the most appropriate ways of supplying those materials.

We will be keen to work with you to ensure that there is strategic buy in for the approach. This will affect assessments and decision making, and managers and team leaders will need to understand and be eager to use it across their services.

Note: C-Change is compatible with current approaches, including Signs of Safety, and the Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need.

Materials - We will provide all materials including the comprehensive manual and all learning resources.

Note: The approach offers a flexible range of materials that can be chosen for use depending on the needs of the child(ren) and family concerned.

Deliver 2 Day Training Package – the training is provided over 2 face to face training days.

We can provide this for up to 24 learners using 2 trainers. We want the training to be as experiential as possible to maximise the impact of the training. We want learners to open up, share and feel comfortable asking questions and testing out theories etc. Feedback has shown us that learners need the time and space to reflect and we would like to give them the opportunity to do that.

Our trainers always provide a wide range of different and innovative learning activities to ensure the engagement of learners as outlined below.

2 Follow up consultancy support sessions - we know from experience that embedding any new approach requires learners to practice and learn continually. We therefore believe that we should **return twice** after the initial training at intervals to be agreed but possibly after 6 weeks and then a further 8 weeks. This could be:

- a workshop/action learning set considering what has gone well/less well, what have they learnt, how can they embed this into practice, creating a personal action plan and a team action plan and considering what else is needed, how and by when in order to ensure that they are embedding the approach into their everyday work. And/Or
- it could be that we provide a session supporting workers **using the model under cross examination in court**. We know that the model works well in the court arena and we believe that staff attending court would benefit from this. It would increase confidence in their judgement and support them to transfer theory into practice for cross examination.

Evaluation – we will carry out continuous evaluation and consider what has worked well/less so and any further support needed to embed the approach in the area. We will naturally be keen to discuss the learning with you to ensure that we provide exactly what the sector needs.

3. Why Interface

Interface is a national provider of **training** and expertise around working **with Children, Individuals and Families**.

Our overall aim is to **enhance capacity and expertise** with a genuine mission to transform lives.

Our team have been instrumental in driving forward at a national level, the whole family approach and the principles of service redesign that fundamentally influence systems change.

We have been involved in assisting organisations to **build the capacity** of their staff and to share learning on aspects of professional practice. We are **solution focused** and **strength based** with an underpinning value base that is passionate about the need to deliver services that can improve sustainable outcomes.

We focus on Children's Social Care, Early Help, Education, Housing, Early Years, and Troubled Families and have a proven record of delivering positive outcomes in these areas. We have an excellent reputation for high quality training which meets the needs of the workforce.

Our trainers have all worked intensively with children individuals and families with complex needs. They include members of the former Families Delivery Team, Families at Risk Division at the Department for Education (DfE). They have been joined by Associates with **experience of providing training and implementing improvement and change programmes** across Local Authorities and together they bring a wealth of experience around:

- Assessing parental capacity for courts
- Working directly with families with complex and multiple needs
- Early help redesign
- System change
- Evidence based interventions
- Evaluation and monitoring
- Early Help and Troubled families agenda
- Front line social work training – we have trained over 6,500 practitioners and managers

We receive excellent feedback on the quality of the training and the experience and credibility of the trainers.

We believe that Interface adds value in the following ways:

- Corporate Experience – we were funded by both the DfE and DCLG Troubled Families Team, to provide support for working with vulnerable children and families.
- National coverage and links with 99% of LAs. We have a wealth of information and an up to date picture of emerging and innovative practice across the country.
- Links to central government - close to policy developments and officers as well as some MPs in the fields of working with vulnerable children and families.

- Associates with a history of front line practice and a wealth of experience in knowing “what works” with families with complex and multiple needs.
- Proven track record of securing improved outcomes through our training provision.
- Receive consistently excellent feedback on the services we provide and are regarded well for our excellent understanding and credibility.
- Underpinning value base that is passionate about the need to deliver services that make a difference.
- Excellent QA processes.
- Flexible support through trainers and constant evaluation/ feedback.

We have a **strong capacity and knowledge base** on which to draw on to meet training and development needs and have developed innovative interactive media tools to support learning. For more information see www.interfaceenterprises.co.uk

Our training style

Through their experience and qualifications, our trainers always provide a wide range of different and innovative learning activities to ensure the engagement of learners.

All our training is designed to engage the learner through a range of learning styles:

- using the experience of the participants,
- creating learning experiences on the course,
- Introducing ideas in ways that help participants integrate new understanding into their existing knowledge, skills and values.

In practice this will be a combination of activities that involve exploring values, principles and emotional responses, developing and practicing skills and competencies, listening to, reflecting on, evaluating and remembering new ideas.

Quality Assurance

Interface applies a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process in its training provision and all of our trainers are accredited in this approach. Our QCI covers the process from initial commissioning to post delivery. We will negotiate CQI application as part of all set up negotiations.