
Support for schools working with vulnerable children and families

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Who we are

Interface was set up by, and includes, members of the former **Families Delivery Team** and Families at Risk Division at the **Department for Education (DfE)**. We are still a key strategic partner for the DfE on effective approaches in working with vulnerable families. We have been joined by experienced associates with a background in schools, Ofsted inspections and issues associated with vulnerable children and young people as well as implementing training and improvement programmes across local areas, schools/academies and broad-based workforce development. We have a wealth of experience around the families with multiple problems agenda, the school improvement/raising achievement agenda and support roles in general.

What we do

Interface is a national provider of expertise on effective approaches to support vulnerable families.

We help local authorities and their partners jointly plan, design, implement, improve and evaluate services across priority areas relating to the needs of vulnerable families. We focus on child poverty, children's centres, early intervention, education, social care and troubled families and have a proven record of delivering positive outcomes in these areas.

Our aim

Our overall aim is to enhance capacity and expertise with a genuine mission to transform the lives of vulnerable families.

At Interface we understand the impact of the whole family on the outcomes for the child. Through our **Think Family** work and now through the **Troubled Families** agenda we want to **transform the lives of vulnerable children and families.**

Removing the significant **'barriers to learning'** that their most vulnerable children present, is a key priority for many schools. Supporting schools with this aspect of their work is also one of the central priorities of Interface linked to our work with the troubled families agenda.

This document outlines the support that we can offer schools in our specialist area. This includes the **Schools Vulnerable Children Audit, Workshops** and **Training packages**, which have been developed to support schools who work with vulnerable children and their families.

Contact us for more information.

Our values and ambition

Interface has an underpinning value base that is passionate about the need to deliver services that turn around the lives of families with multiple and complex needs. We believe that significant support and help can be made through the interface between the child and their educational environment.

We want to work with schools, colleges and academies to ensure that you are able to provide necessary and valuable support to the child. We have developed a range of **workshops, tools and training** to support head teachers, senior leadership teams and staff in understanding the issues of children within vulnerable families, with the ultimate goal of improving the experience of education for students who are part of a family with multiple problems and thereby raising their achievements.

These values and drivers are reflected in the quality of our work, the strength of our relationships and our commitment to this agenda.

Our experience and knowledge

Interface are unique in having experience of both the strategic design and implementation of projects, services and improvement as well as direct experience at a local and practical level in supporting schools, local authorities and partners to develop measures and systems to meet strategic outcomes.

We have fantastic associates with extensive experience, knowledge and expertise across school improvement, leadership development and in supporting 'system leadership' across the early years' sector as well as an in-depth understanding of families with complex needs.

We believe that significant support and help can be made through the interface between the child and their educational environment.

Interface **Vulnerable Children Audit** for schools

Interface has worked with schools to develop an electronic tool to help school leaders, governors, teachers, support staff and multi-agency partners to identify vulnerable children and their families to work more effectively and efficiently with them.

There is extensive research demonstrating the link between **vulnerability and levels of attainment and achievement** for individual children. The recent DfE Family Stressors research provides clear evidence that children can experience a range of stressful situations which lead to potential vulnerability with respect to their educational development and well-being.

The findings are helpful in flagging up the areas where children may be at risk of failing badly on educational and well being outcomes, and where interventions (by schools working in partnership with other agencies) might be justifiably targeted to help close the 'achievement gaps'.

Research tells us there is potentially a direct link between the vulnerability and attainment or achievement of children. Converting that knowledge into strategies and interventions is difficult. Tracking the impact of those strategies and interventions is a further challenge.

The factors identified in the research as having a clear impact on children's educational achievement have been incorporated into the Interface **Schools Vulnerable Children Audit tool**.

What does the tool help schools to do?

- **Analyse in-depth the 'anatomy' of the child's vulnerability.** The tool enables the school to input a thorough and detailed holistic analysis – using a range of vulnerability indicators – to identify the potential vulnerability of children in the school. The indicators have been derived from practice and the most recent research which establishes links between vulnerability factors and children's academic achievement
- **Record the actions/interventions** which they have put into place to help mitigate the effects of the vulnerability factors
- **Record the impact of the actions/interventions** which they have put into place to help mitigate the effects of the vulnerability factors. The tool allows details of the impact to be entered as text, as well as enabling up to three up-to-date vulnerability assessments to be made for each child so that changes can be recognised
- **Analyse the nature of the vulnerability of children across the school** so that decisions can be made about resource allocations and group level interventions. The tool aggregates the individual pupil vulnerability profiles of the children so that a whole cohort or school wide picture becomes apparent and can be acted upon
- **Effectively target resources** and interventions to support the attainment and achievement of those children potentially affected by a range of vulnerability factors.

The offer

In addition the tool will help schools to:

- Provide a range of **key lines of enquiry** to explore around potential and actual vulnerability of individuals and groups of children
- Identify what information is **routinely captured** about individuals and where systems and processes could be refined
- Identify **gaps in knowledge** where more detailed knowledge of a child's potential vulnerability may be required
- Work with multi-agency partners to consider, in some depth, the challenges a child is facing and how best to put in place mitigating actions/interventions
- Provide detailed printed **reports** on individual children for transition and other purposes.

The tool can be used as:

- A **strategic planning tool**
- An **individual planning tool** around a child/children
- An **evidence base** e.g. to help support the effective use of the pupil premium.

Individual schools

Interface is offering schools the chance to purchase the tool with a one day consultancy support package. This package enables schools to:

- Receive a personalised school copy of the tool
- Ensure that they are totally familiar with the functionality of the vulnerability tool. The associate will work with the nominated staff to enter the details of a number of children and to generate individual and group reports
- Ensure that they can use the tool effectively in relation to their needs. Our associate will work with nominated staff to look in-depth at child circumstances, associated needs of the school and how the tool can be used to best support these
- Consider their likely ongoing need around working with vulnerable children and families (informed by the use of the vulnerability tool) and to develop an action plan to address these.

Cluster groups

We provide a group workshop, ideal for a cluster of schools to consider the tool in-depth.

This enables schools to:

- Receive a personalised school copy of the tool
- Understand the key learnings from the Family Stressors review
- Cover the functionality of the vulnerability tool. The associate will work through the tool demonstrating how to enter details of a number of children and to generate individual and group reports
- Consider ways of using the tool effectively
- Work through real examples in the room
- Consider their likely ongoing need around working with vulnerable children and families (informed by the use of the vulnerability tool).

Workshops

Effective multi-agency working

We provide a half day or full day workshop/training session on effective multi-agency working using the **Schools Vulnerable Children Audit tool** to inform decision making and action planning with partners.

This is ideal for those working in schools and wanting to be more effective in multi-agency working and/or those working on the troubled families agenda.

Workforce training

Interface offers a practical hands-on training programme, enabling practitioners to work effectively with families with multiple and complex needs. Our training programme focuses on skills and strategy development and understanding why approaches work.

We know that equipping the workforce with the skills to do the job is of paramount importance.

A range of workshops, training and development support can be offered, subject to need, but the following are currently offered as Interface standard products to support schools. These products provide a flavour of what we can offer. Additional training needs can be explored and met as required.

These **practical programmes** support school staff to be able them to work effectively with families with multiple and complex needs. They are practical and **hands-on**, focusing on skills and strategy development, backed up by an understanding of why approaches work. They produce more confident and competent practitioners who are ready to deliver positive and effective support to children and families.

Learners will explore and use a range of tools to **engage, communicate, assess** and **support**, leading to sustained change within families which enhances their capacity to function and to attain.

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
- Exclusive video interactive **Skillsbites** clips.

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

Course notes and support materials are provided electronically, along with a certificate to confirm course completion.



Governor training

Taking the chair

A practical 'how to' course for new and aspiring chairs of governors.

The role of the governor

Comprehensive induction course offering the opportunity to learn about their role including strategic accountability, critical friends, data and finance.

School improvement

A five session module considering the Ofsted focus areas and the Ofsted framework:

- Quality of teaching
- Behaviour and safety
- Leadership and management
- RAISE
- Understanding Ofsted.

Ofsted training workshop

- Ofsted inspections
- The new Ofsted inspection framework for schools
- Changes to Ofsted regarding governance
- What Ofsted requires from a school
- What Ofsted expects from school governors
- What is wrong in declining schools?

Understanding education data workshop

- Understanding pupil performance data
- Monitoring performance data and targets
- RAISE online training
- Ofsted data dashboard
- Family Fisher Trust Live Dashboard (where appropriate)
- Pupil premium and primary sports funding initiatives
- Monitoring of achievement for different groups.

Effective governance workshop

- Characteristics of good governance
- The core functions of a governing body statutory responsibilities
- Performance management and capability
- Engaging with stakeholders governance in multi academy trusts.

School readiness

Understanding a child's all round development needs is critical to planning effectively for their learning, care and safety. This is of enhanced importance for those children at risk of failing to thrive at school for whatever reason.

We have created a **School Start** tool which is a valuable resource to observe, identify and support children and respond to their individual needs. It is of particular importance for more vulnerable children who may find the transition to school difficult and may already be developmentally behind peers and at risk of falling further behind in the first year of school.

School Start provides a simple and easy to use framework for the structured observation of individual children, small groups or whole cohorts. Its purpose is to provide a means of assessing and understanding the developmental needs of children to enable teachers and other early years educators to plan appropriately for effective learning and focused support.

Understanding a child's all round development needs is critical to planning effectively for their learning.

Pick 'n' Mix delivery options

Model	Learning outcomes
Engaging disengaged families – Short Introduction 2 hours – Ideal after end of school day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand the features of children from disadvantaged groups - Understand why families can be disengaged - Consider school processes relating to these children and families - Understand the factors which underpin effective engagement
Effective referrals to children's social care – Access to additional support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand the referral process - Understand thresholds and requirements of Children's Social Care and relationship to other support available - Understanding what to look for in your assessment - Confidence in knowing what cases to refer to and when - Understanding what a good referral looks like - Confidence in your ability to challenge appropriately - Understanding and having confidence in escalating concerns - Understanding your future role – information and involvement
Intensive family support and the role of the key worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding the key features of the family intervention model - Understanding the importance of fidelity to the model - Understanding the Key Worker role - Understanding the key features of effective intervention - Using the whole family approach - Understanding the use of persistent and assertive approach - Understanding the importance of, identify and use a range of sanctions and rewards
Effective engagement and communication with 'hard to reach' families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing ideas and strategies for increasing numbers of vulnerable families reached - Identifying strategies for building trusting relationships with families - Improving approach to working in partnership with families - Understanding how to adapt communication methods - Identifying strategies to break down barriers to engagement and participation - Becoming more self-reflective to develop strategies to embed inclusive and non-judgemental practice - Being able to provide effective feedback - Using challenge effectively
Risk assessment when supporting families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding what a risk assessment is and its purpose - Understanding the content of a risk assessment and who should be involved in its construction - Being able to construct and use a risk assessment - Being able to respond to different levels of risk
Risk and resilience in children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding and define risk, resilience and self-esteem for individuals and whole families - Demonstrating core techniques for building resilience and self-esteem - Describing the key principles of solution focused brief interventions and motivational interviewing - Exploring the cycle of change for families and identify appropriate exit strategies and long term plans
Tools to support work with families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding how tools can support you in your work with families - Being able to construct and use genograms - Being able to construct and use chronologies - Being able to construct and use timelines
Common mental health issues and their impact on families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An understanding of the stress continuum - The effects of excess stress - Awareness of mental health problems and how they're classified, including depression and anxiety - Awareness of the prevalence of mental health issues - Strategies for dealing with common mental health issues and when to refer - Impact on parenting

Any of these training courses can be selected to create a training package that meets your requirements.

Model	Learning outcomes
Understanding domestic violence and abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having an awareness of domestic violence and abuse - Having an awareness of the characteristics of the male perpetrator - Having an awareness of the behaviours displayed in an abusive relationship - Having an awareness of the impact of domestic abuse and violence - Having an awareness of how to respond when an abused person wants to leave their situation: safety planning
Understanding child and teenage brain development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An exploration of teenage developmental theories – biological, psychological, psychosocial and cognitive - The development of the teenage brain/physical changes - At what age can I/rites of passage - The impact of external factors – environment, culture, religion school, media - Communicating with children and teenagers
Working effectively with parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tools to assess basic parenting capacity - Analysing child parent relationships - Using parent and child observation skills - Offering services that meet the needs of parents - Engaging parents in interventions
Pro social modelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding the key features of pro social modelling - Understanding cognitive behavioural theoretical framework - Identifying strategies to support changes in behaviour <p>Introducing skills and tools such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using positive and solution-focused language - discouraging, by challenging and confronting, undesired values and behaviour
Motivational interviewing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having knowledge and basic awareness of the use of motivational interviewing in practice terms - Skills and tools for use with individuals and families - Understanding of the cycle of change
Solution-focused brief therapy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding the key features of solution-focused brief therapy in whole family work - Identifying the theoretical differences between problem-solving and solution-focused brief therapy - Understanding solution-building conversations when interacting with clients - Planning and sustaining a solution-building conversation with clients

For further information and to discuss options to suit your needs, please contact us. All our costs include trainer/assessor time and administration. To book or for more information, please visit us at www.interfaceenterprises.co.uk

We can work with you to create bespoke packages, drawing on the knowledge and skills base of our team and trainers.



Interface eLearning and Skillsbites

eLearning

Interface have recently developed and are rolling out a range of innovative **eLearning packages** which are ideal as they are **cost effective** and allow you to fit learning around your school day. They can be **accessed for up to a year** at a time, convenient to the individual.

eLearning courses

Intensive family support and the role of the key worker

- An understanding of the key features of intensive family support
- Gain a thorough understanding of effective referral, engagement, assessment contracts and reviews
- An understanding of why the intensive family approach works
- An understanding of the role of the intensive family worker
- An understanding of how to use a range of sanctions and rewards.

Tools to support work with families

- Comprehensive information about how tools can support work with families
- Detailed descriptions supporting you to construct and use:
 - Genograms
 - Chronologies
 - Timelines
- Links to **templates** and **example forms** (also for later use)
- **Activities** and **Quizzes** to embed and test what has been learnt.

Customised eLearning

We can also produce a customised package to incorporate in-house branding and the inclusion of in-house forms. We can also develop a bespoke eLearning course to meet your needs.

Skillsbites

Skillsbites are a series of short films, how-to and impact guides enabling staff to be more effective when communicating and interacting with vulnerable and complex families.

We have created a training package complete with 13 online film clips exploring typical scenarios which practitioners face in their communication and interactions with vulnerable and complex individuals and families.

Each package comes complete with comprehensive training/ discussion notes with prompts, suggestions on how to manage the situation, matters for consideration and suggested impacts (on the family, worker and organisation).

They combine the knowledge and experience of our associates with the skills and expertise of video production company Emoquo. They are based upon concerns raised frequently by practitioners.

The Skillsbites explore scenarios where clients are:

- Threatening
- Avoiding
- Challenging
- Closed down (domestic violence)
- Verbally aggressive
- Depressed
- Inappropriate
- Paying lip service only
- Evasive
- Pretending not to be in
- In passive denial
- Tearful
- Have visitors.

Skillsbites and **eLearning** are particularly relevant to family support workers, SEN staff and parent support advisors.

Why use Interface?

Associates at Interface have a wealth of experience in knowing **what works** with families with complex and multiple needs. We are also experienced in evaluation, monitoring and the development of systems and approaches to ensure local impact can be measured and quantified.

Corporate experience

Interface were previously grant funded by both the **DfE Families at Risk Team** and **DCLG Troubled Families Team**, having been commissioned to provide support for this agenda. Our links with central government mean that we are close to policy developments and are in an excellent position to interpret national policy at a local level.

Interface has a proven track record of **securing improved outcomes** through our consultancy and training provision. We receive consistently excellent feedback on the services we provide and are well-regarded for our excellent understanding of the needs of children and vulnerable families.

Over the last four years our team has been responsible for:

- Implementation and support of 371 intensive family support services
- Providing training for 2,400 front line workers
- School improvement and leadership development
- Supporting development of 'system leadership' across the early years sector
- Service reviews and redesign in many local authorities (LAs)
- Strategic needs assessments in LAs
- Interim roles as Troubled Families coordinators
- Facilitating a program of evidence based training for 617 parenting practitioners
- Embedding Think Family Reforms in every local authority (LA)
- Monitoring grant conditions amounting to £90m
- Providing national, regional and local network meetings for both management and operational staff
- Working in partnership with other Government departments to provide an up to the minute information flow between Government and LAs.



For more information about all our services, please visit us at www.interfaceenterprises.co.uk

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