

# Haringey LSCB Workshop: Responding to the neglect of children and young people.

Facilitated by Josie Collier, Interim Board Manager.

Supported by Eliese Gray



# Purpose of today's workshop?

- At the LSCB meeting in September 2017, a neglect strategy was agreed. It is a strategic framework to support our efforts in working with families There are some guiding principles that provide the framework for the strategy – what we need to do is to develop these:
  - ★ A shared understanding of neglect and its impact
  - ★ Working together as a system
  - ★ Promoting the rights of the child
  - ★ Supporting good parenting
  - ★ Early recognition and identification, timely assessment and intervention
  - ★ Strong understanding of increased vulnerabilities in children
  - ★ Ensuring improved outcomes.....

**First – a few words from Councillor Elin Weston – Lead member for Children, Haringey Council**



# Running order (roughly!) of today's conversation.

- Context of today's work shop
- Thinking about the methodology for developing a neglect action plan
- Messages from research
- Case studies to look and think about practice
- An appreciative inquiry to help us think strategically
- NB There will be a break at 11.30 and we will finish at 1.00.

# No ground rules, but today please can you...

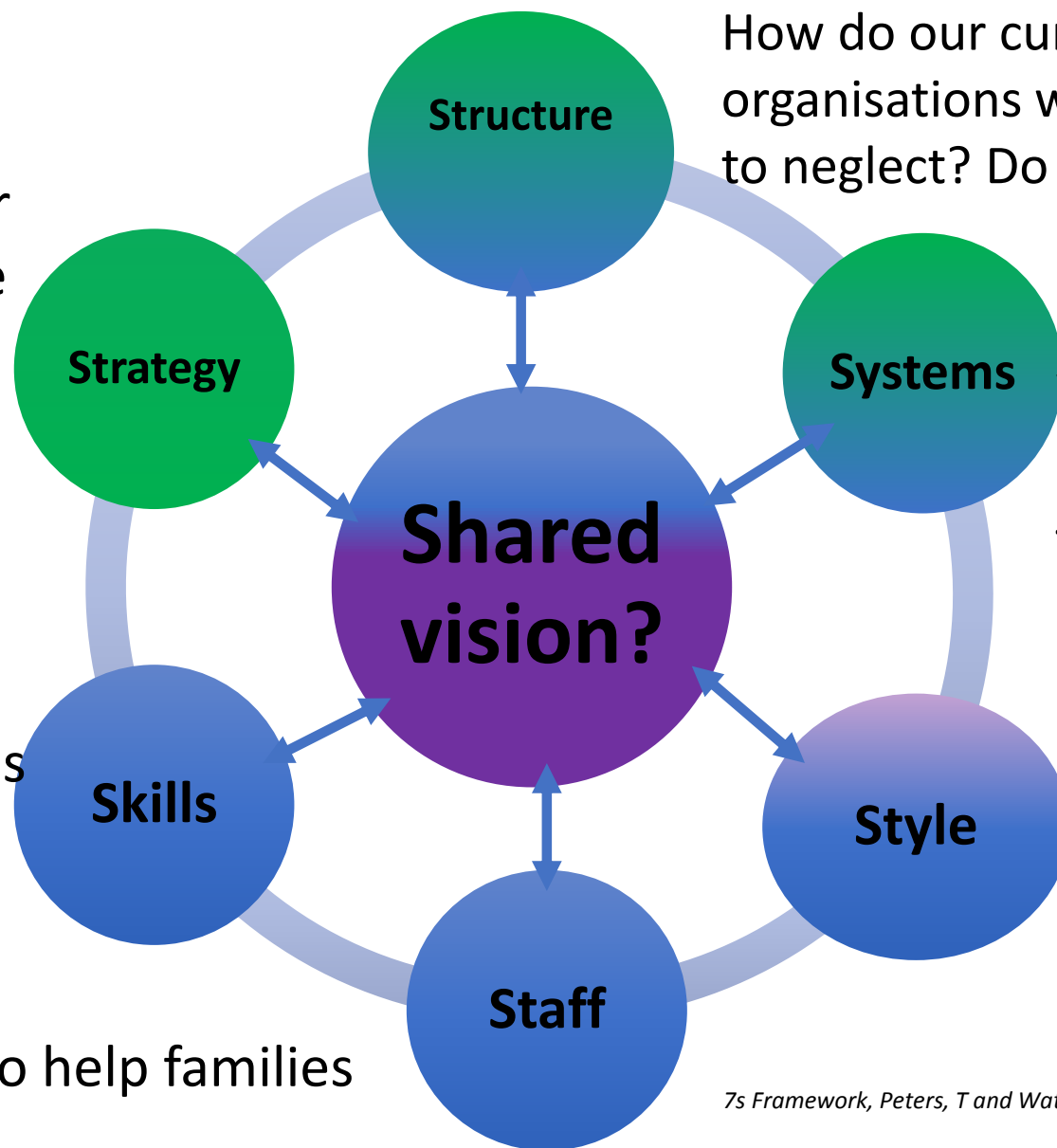
- Tell us as much as you can about your experience, within a series of facilitated conversations about working with child neglect.
- Be honest, be brave – say what you think and feel about working with families where neglect is a concern.
- Be respectful and courteous to each other and about the families we work with and try to share and to understand some of the different values, experiences and positions that we have in the room
- Remember – this is complicated.....we are trying to move beyond the basics...so pat yourself on the back for the job that you do in the circumstances you do it in!

# What might the Haringey system to respond to neglect look like?

What are the realistic achievable priorities for the next 6 months and for the next two years for the **LSCB neglect strategy**?

What are the key **skills** that we need as a workforce to work families where there is neglect? What can we work on?

What **staff** do we need to help families make positive changes?



How do our current **structures** in our organisations work to identify and respond to neglect? Do we need change?

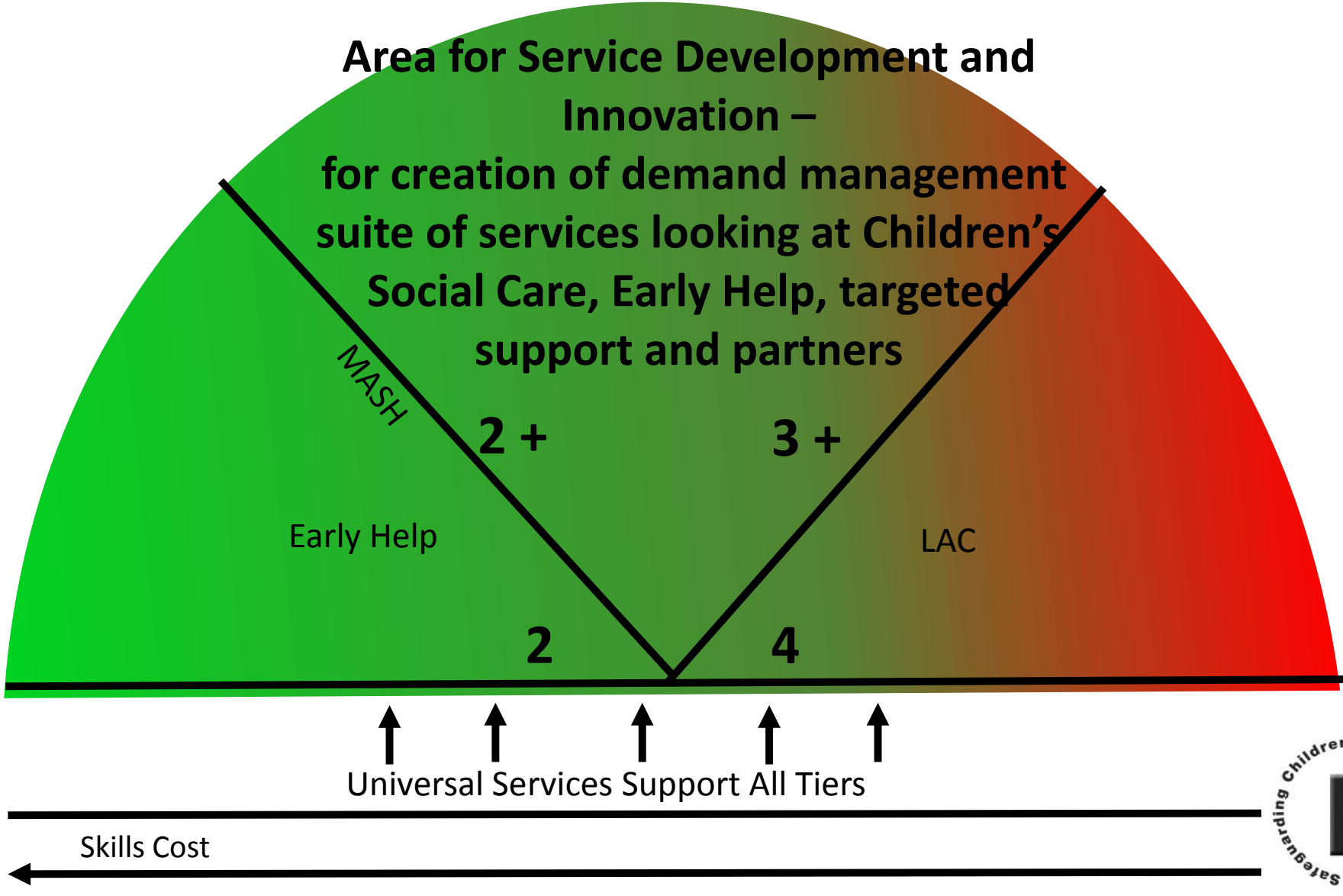
What **systems** might we need in place to enable us to identify and respond effectively to neglect?

**Style** is about organisational culture – how do we go about the business of helping and safeguarding?

*7s Framework, Peters, T and Waterman 1982, R "In Search of Excellence",*

**STRATEGICALLY: Safeguarding is everybody's business**

Multi-agency partners, communities and organisations



# Useful Definitions

- **‘Harm’** is defined in the Children Act (1989)- ‘ill-treatment or impairment of health or development’, and **‘a child in need’** is a child whose health or development is likely to be (significantly or further) impaired without the provision of services. We need to understand what *actual, current from neglect* looks like.
- **‘Development’** has different dimensions: eg social, emotional, cognitive; physical
- **‘Risk’** in safeguarding is the possibility (or our prediction) of something happening i.e. *harm* to a child or young person in the future. This could be attributable to *unwanted behaviours* around the child or young person; or that the child or young person is behaving in a way that might result in *harm* to themselves. Unwanted or challenging events can also sometimes have a harmful impact upon a child or young person’s development



# Definitions - continued

- In Working Together 2015 '*significant harm*' is the **threshold** that justifies that compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children and gives the Local Authority a duty to make enquiries to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of the child....but it is the definition of '*significant*' which makes our work interesting!!
- One of the most reliable indicators we have of current or future harm is previous harm. This is really significant for neglect.

# The definition of neglect from Working Together (2018).

- The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:
  - ❖ provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
  - ❖ protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
  - ❖ ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
  - ❖ ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
  - ❖ It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic
  - ❖ emotional needs.

# Glaser (2011) offers a nice typology of emotional abuse and neglect.

- I. Emotional unavailability, unresponsiveness and neglect.
- II. Interacting with the child with hostility, blame, denigration, rejection or scapegoating. .
- III. Developmentally inappropriate or inconsistent interactions with the child.
- IV. Failure to recognize or acknowledge the child's individuality and the psychological boundary between the parent and the child.
- V. Failure to promote the child's socialization within the child's context, by either active mis-socialization or corruption; by isolating the child or by failing to provide adequate stimulation and opportunities for learning.

# Lets start with practice: We have some case studies to look at?

- What is your initial response to this case in terms of the risk to the child/ young person?
- What has informed that response?
- Were there any differences in the group – if so why? Or why not?

# What do we need to think about in our work with neglect?

- Identifying behaviours that may lead to neglect and their impact – separating out the causes and the symptoms from the impact upon the child
- Where do we look? The child (aspects of development); the parent; the parent-child interaction; environmental and societal factors
- Younger children; older children and young people; disabled children – what might harm look like in each
- What constitutes good enough change and communicating this to families?
- Frequency, Intensity, Duration, Onset (FIDO)
- Resilience and recovery – what works?

# Attachment theory and the neglected child

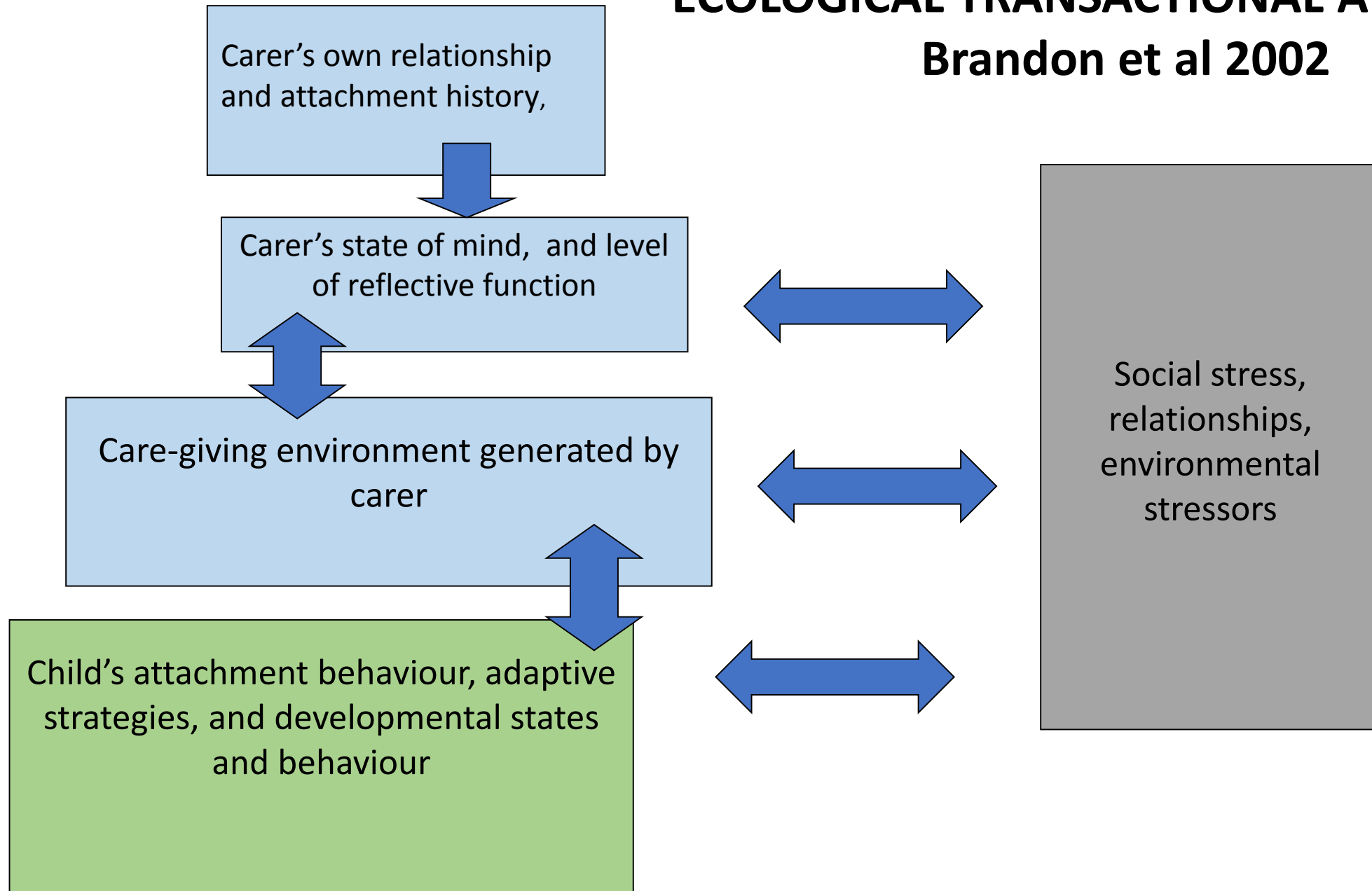
- Attachment behaviour is proximity seeking to the attachment figure in the face of threat (Prior and Glaser 2006)
- Disorganised neglect leads to fractious, irritable toddlers – the learn to turn the ‘volume and frequency of distress signal’ or engage in seductive behaviour (Howe)
- Depressed passive neglect lead to listless and incurious children – have given up.

# Key research in to impact on the child

- Egeland et al – (1983) – Minnesota mother child project. A longitudinal study that looked at types of abuse and neglect and linked these to developmental outcomes.
- Neglected children presented with “the least positive and most negative affect of all groups...the most dependent and demonstrated the least ego control”

# ECOLOGICAL TRANSACTIONAL APPROACH

## Brandon et al 2002





# Challenges in working to understand neglect (Brandon et al. 2014)?

- Agreeing what constitutes child neglect, and its overlap with emotional abuse.
- Parental intentions – omission vs commission – although the likelihood for harm to be caused should take away from this
- Chronic nature of neglect – we become inured
- This is not crisis work which prompts an emergency response
- It has the potential to overwhelm – not individual one off episodes of questionable parenting but all pervasive in the child's and family's experience
- Cultural aspects of parenting might challenge us
- Neglect appears alongside other forms of harm – move back from labelling and understand the complexity.
- 'Mindsets' – such a useful concept!

## Back to the case studies:

- What went well in the professional practice response?
- What could have been done differently in terms of practice?

# Local LSCB multi-agency neglect audit

- **Working well:** Evidence that *child protection* procedures are understood by professionals across the partnership and there is attendance of key partners at multiagency meetings
- **Working well:** Child protection plans and CIN plans articulate what tasks are to be completed and all key agencies address the presenting area of need or risk when a child / young person is referred or comes to their attention
- **What could be different:** The signs and symptoms of neglect is not well understood across the partnership
- **What could be different:** Family history is not consistently taken and understood by the key agencies
- **What could be different:** The voice of the child is not always heard
- **What could be different:** down plans to Early Help or Universal services are not always evident
- **What could be different:** Non-engagement or resistance is not recognised or challenged

# Back to the case studies: Some case studies to look at?

- If this was a Haringey case, what needs to change or improve in our response in order to ensure that the multi-agency response is effective?

# Lets think strategically:

**1. What does our multi-agency practice in working with neglect in Haringey look like when it is at its BEST?**

2. What might be in the future?  
Imagine if we were subject to a huge inspection across the borough and the inspectorate said this is the best ever response to neglect ever, what would have supported that in happening?

3. What might our combined response to neglect look like (in more detail?)

**4. What are the real current opportunities we have for making some of your ideas happen?**