



**Centre for Educational Development,
Appraisal and Research**

**Understanding the initial impact
of Early Support and Key Working training
through the voices of providers and families -
a qualitative study**

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18 September 2013

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WARWICK

FCT Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia
MINISTÉRIO DA EDUCAÇÃO E CIÊNCIA

Acknowledgements

Conducting this research was a rich and transformational personal and academic experience.

I would like to deeply thank Early Support for supporting and entrusting me with this responsibility; Early Support and Key Working trainers, training participants and families they work with, for their immense generosity and willingness to participate in the research; and Professor Geoff Lindsay to whom I am truly thankful for closely following this study, for reading this report and for his excellent comments.

The research is part of a post-doctoral investigation, financed by the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), which aims to establish Recommended Practices for high quality training and professional development in Early Childhood Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education.

Post-Doctoral Grant SFRH/BPD/84993/2012

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

In England issues related to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) were subject to new government recommendations for its action (DfE, 2011, 2012). This socio-political framework constitutes a challenge and opportunity to promote high quality services to a diverse group of children and young people with SEND - from birth to 25 years - and their families.

In this framework, training and personnel preparation are critical elements for success, demanding a renovation in the providers' attitude, towards the new intervention requirements. These involve technical quality - regarding knowledge, expertise and competence held by the professional in this field - but also the practical and reflective expression of this competence, founded in empathic qualities of collaborative involvement, leading to a transdisciplinary provision of services, focusing on family and their natural context.

The Department for Education Green Paper on SEND (2011) identified and recognized Early Support as a key approach to meeting the needs of children, young people and families. Considering its positive results, Early Support was extended up the age range - from birth to 25. This led to the Early Support Key Working training - two days training, free at point of delivery - and capacity building model for trainers.

According to the present framework, specific objectives for this research, on the subject of Early Support and Key Working training, were proposed and agreed by Early Support:

- a. Understanding how Early Support and Key Working training principles and contents relate to the existing body of knowledge regarding training in Early Childhood Intervention and Special Education;
- b. Understanding how contents are delivered to providers of multiagency groups (approaches/processes), with diverse roles (across disciplines) and parents, regarding its principles and goals - including trainers' preparation for this training delivery.
- c. Understand the impact of this training on the providers' (Health, Social Services, Education, Voluntary sector and parents/carers) motivation and ability/competence to:
 - facilitate early and coordinated assessment, planning, intervention and evaluation in partnership with parents/carers and young people - constructing a single Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP);
 - provide a preventive and protective person-centered response to help families and young people live 'ordinary lives'.
- d. Understand the impact of key working on families, children and young peoples' well being and quality of life – impact on their real needs and strengths.

The research was developed in different stages, in a chronological approach, closely connected to the sequence of the research objectives, involving:

- **Document Analysis** of training contents, from first ES&KW training drafts to its final documentation (June 2012 to January 2013);
- **Observation** of five ES&KW trainings, including two Pilots, in the English regions of East Midlands, South West, South East and North and South London, where training was carried out in cities, towns and villages (July 2012 to June 2013).
- **Observation** of a Trainer for Trainers (T4T) training (September, 2012)
- Three **focus group discussions** with ES&KW training participants (February to June 2013)
- Thirteen **in-depth interviews**, including interviews with trainers, training participants and families they work with (February to August 2013)
- Three **questionnaires** to Pilot ES&KW training participants (August 2013)
- **Reflective practice** carried out by five training participants (February to July, 2013)

The research methodology was built upon its research aims, namely to understand the trainers and participants' points of view, their perspectives about ES&KW training (contents, processes, delivery) and its concrete impact on working with other professionals and with children, young people with SEND and their families. It also aimed to listen to families that experienced this approach with training participants.

The research was conducted over the period June 2012 to August 2013 and involved, throughout the research's different stages, 86 participants, including ES&KW trainers, training participants and families. The number of training participants involved in the follow up individual interviews was smaller than originally planned due to several circumstances linked to participants themselves, but also to training dates involving the selected trainers, and to the number of training participants in each ES&KW trainings observed. Nevertheless, the research methodology proposed and accepted by Early Support (Research Proposal, September 2012) was thoroughly followed. **Since we only had a small number of research participants, the results are not generalizable but they suggest further questions, directions, and training implications.**

Purpose and structure of the report

The report's structure follows the chronological connection between all the research's stages, intentionally relating them and considering their impact on successful training outcomes.

Thus, in the first sections, we look at the fundamental cornerstones of ES&KW training based on its underpinning theoretical model, ethos and principles and the way these are revealed in the guiding documentation. We then observe and analyse the preliminary training phases, *before* the ES&KW training took place, including Pilot trainings and Training for trainers (T4T), following the training adjustments to contents and delivery that then took place. Subsequently, we present the ES&KW training first impact throughout its most defining aspects - Trainer's recruitment, Preparation and training, Participant's recruitment and involvement, Families' involvement, Training sequence and contents and Training delivery –

including both ES&KW trainers and training participants perspectives. We then consider the impact of ES&KW training through an on-going reflective process and an individual interview with training participants conducted three to four months *after* the ES&KW training. Finally, we present families' views of Key Working and of their Key workers, which were ES&KW training participants, analyzing them according to Key Working functions.

Research findings and points for consideration

Early Support and Key Working training is founded in a person centered approach (i.e., child, young person and family-centred service delivery) and in partnership work between practitioners and children, young people and their families. This is what we identify as the training's 'vision', clearly present in training documents produced by Early Support, namely in the analysed "Introduction for trainers" (Early Support, 2013).

On the other hand, this vision strongly interacts with current reality, which includes constraints and barriers connected to the training itself – i.e., Trainers' recruitment, preparation and training; Participants' recruitment and involvement; Families' involvement; Training sequence and contents and Training delivery - but also to the concrete *translation* of trainings' outcomes in participants' lives and professional contexts.

The gap between vision and reality, can be described as generating a 'creative tension' (Senge, 2006), a source of energy that drives us to move towards the vision. In the research we look at the gap between the training vision and current reality – observed and analyzed in the course of the research - in this creative, resourceful way.

Following this perspective throughout the research, we recognized that although the ES&KW training had a concrete positive impact on all training participants, whether transformational or reassuring of their present way of working towards the training's aims and desired outcomes, some gaps between ES&KW vision and reality emerged. These comprise the **first group of findings** - ES&KW training cornerstones, initially proposed by Early Support, not entirely present in training delivery.

The second group of research findings brought together ES&KW training elements - picked up during ES&KW training observations and discussed by trainers and training participants - that namely consider the training's structure, its proposed contents and their connection within the two training days; and the relevance of ES&KW training for more experienced and knowledgeable training participants in Early Support and Key working domains.

We will now present the research findings followed by considerations that emerge from them. These **points for consideration**, are mainly intended to support Early Support's reflection for future ES&KW training in all training's stages – from Pilot training and Training for Trainers, to ES&KW training deliveries – but may also benefit other training initiatives, enhancing and reinforcing their important impact on participants' work with children, young children with SEND and their families, and with other practitioners.

Before Early Support and Key Working training

Before the definitive ES&KW started in January 2013, several Pilot trainings and Training for Trainers (T4T) took place. Between the pilot training stage and the definitive ES&KW training, adjustments to contents and delivery were completed. Beginning our observations – of two pilot trainings and one T4T – we became aware of several issues that from the outset seemed central for the success of the trainings implementation.

Pilot trainings

Since we had previously learned from the training documentation analysis about the training ethos, principles, theoretical basis, contents and delivery processes, we were able to establish the first relation between the projected training and its delivery - between vision and reality.

Thus, the observation of both pilot trainings was fundamental to begin the research process, namely to understand how training contents are materialized through training deliveries. Although we observed two very distinct training groups and trainers, the trainings outcomes were assured by the skilled way trainers addressed the group's needs without losing track of its fundamental aims and structure. On the other hand, since these trainers were the developers of the ES&KW training it was predictable that their delivery was particularly consistent with the trainings ethos, principles and outcomes previewed.

Throughout these Pilot trainings we also observed critical incidents that emphasized trainers' capacity to address challenging questions in an immediate yet sensitive way.

On one of the Pilot training events participants presented a local document, highlighting the connection between training contents and local efforts to put them into practice, which followed the Early Support recommendations and seemed fundamental for the training's outcomes.

Even though these and other findings clearly highlighted the training's strengths, some barriers for its full implementation were also found:

- Although the training dynamics led to relevant individual and group involvement, training participants didn't form multiagency groups as recommended. They also showed very distinct knowledge and experience about Early Support and Key Working.
- Some changes were proposed by pilot training participants to ES&KW training contents during the training delivery, but it wasn't clear if these would have an impact on the training's final version.
- We moreover observed that trainers didn't prepare parents' and young person's participation *before* the training took place. Although their participation was truly welcomed and significant *during* training, there were specific moments when the preparation *before* training felt needed.

These findings lead to several considerations that can be brought together in the two groups previously presented. It's interesting to verify that several Pilot training findings were similar to those of the final ES&KW training, thus pointing to the importance of this preliminary stage of training, to highlight its strengths and overcome its barriers. The points for consideration that we now present aim to support the reflection for future ES&KW training initiatives that involve Pilot delivery stages.

Points for consideration - Pilot trainings

First group of findings – “between vision and reality”

- *Since Pilot trainings aim to offer an experimental opportunity to understand the impact of ES&KW training (contents and dynamics/process), training participants should form multiagency groups - with representatives from Health, Social Services, Education, Voluntary Sector and with parents represented amongst the participants - as strongly recommended by Early Support.*
- *Parents’ and Young Peoples’ participation should also be enhanced with the recommended Early Support preparation.*

Second group of findings – rethinking ES&KW projected training

- *There is an ongoing need, namely on the Pilot stage, to review and reflect about the aims of a projected training and of its approach. The adjustment between each activity and participants’ previous knowledge, strengths and needs should be carefully considered and reviewed in this preliminary training phase.*
- *In Pilots it is important to be clear about the extent to which contents and trainings processes can be modified as a result of the Pilot training and the concrete role training participants can (or cannot) have in these transformations.*
- *Since Key Working contents and processes, underpinned by the Early Support principles, are challenging and potentially transformative, support seems truly important for its achievement. This underlines the importance of giving local support to the training group after the training.*

Training for Trainers (T4T)

From the two pilot trainings observed, it became clear that **Trainer’s recruitment, preparation and training** was one of the areas that needed more attention, from the very beginning, considering the training’s aims and desired outcomes.

This diversity of training experience, skills and competences of the T4T participants was truly demanding for trainers - since participants were asked to work in groups and introduce specific parts of the ES&KW training, an equilibrium between their experience, competences and skills was needed to create balanced groups, with fair opportunities for all to share their knowledge and skills in a safe yet challenging way. Following this sensitive approach a transformed attitude towards the training and its delivery was observed throughout the two training days.

In a similar way to the Pilot ES&KW trainings observed, it was an intense training with a large number of proposed activities, involving pre-reading and preparation. This previous reading was apparently done in different ways by participants – some evidenced an in depth knowledge of the suggested reading contents while others seem uninformed about them.

T4T trainers persistently reinforced to future ES&KW trainers the need to carefully understand and listen to the training groups’ concrete thoughts, needs and strengths, which seemed fundamental for the trainers training.

The thread that conducted the training's ethos was visible in the T4T delivery – the connection between training contents was recurrently reinforced. Although the rhythm of the delivery process and activities proposed was intense, this connection was visibly present.

Points for consideration - Training for Trainers (T4T)

First group of findings – “between vision and reality”

- *Previous readings are essential to prepare training delivery. It should be stressed that this is a condition for trainers to participate in T4T.*

Second group of findings – rethinking ES&KW projected training

- *T4T underlines a process of self-reflection and consciousness of each potential trainer pointing towards the need of a mentoring process along the T4T development. As part of T4T, ES&KW novice trainers' should initially **shadow experienced trainers and co-train** with them, to enhance these fundamental competences.*
- *Since all delivery proposals need to be clearly structured around the Early Support ethos and principles, the total amount and rhythm of the activities proposed in T4T should allow these connections to become clear to all potential ES&KW trainers.*

The Early Support and Key Working *first training impact*

Essential aspects of the ES&KW training found in trainings observed will now be considered:

Trainer recruitment, preparation and training

After the Pilot ES&KW trainings and the Training for Trainers (T4T) observations, the thread that weaves the research became very much visible, namely when we followed trainers - present in that T4T - in their ES&KW training delivery. Trainers observed had different knowledge and experience of Early Support and Early Support training (from deep to recent knowledge and experience) as well as distinct experience as trainers, but shared the vision of ES&KW training as a means for supporting practitioners and parents to work together, in family centered, positive, concrete and transformational way.

This motivation was consistently observed during the ES&KW training deliveries, underlining the importance of the rigorous and sensitive way involved in recruiting and preparing trainers for ES&KW training.

In ES&KW training 1, a shadow trainer was present - after doing T4T, the trainer asked to do so, in order to reinforce her capacity for delivering it in the future. This was described as a fundamental experience.

Another of the trainers observed (T3), that delivered ES&KW training for the first time, also did a shadow training experience after T4T and before this first training delivery. Even so, she describes this first experience as lead trainer as challenging and demanding.

Point for consideration - Trainer's recruitment, preparation and training

First group of findings – “between vision and reality”

- *Although the presence of co-trainers was initially suggested, this didn't happen,*

except in T4T. From what we observed, the reasons initially invoked for this approach (Early Support, Introduction for Trainers, 2013) remain truly important and valid; however, if it isn't possible to always have this option, at least in these initial stages of training delivery the presence and involvement of an experienced trainer as co-trainer, or offering new trainers the opportunity to co-train before delivering ES&KW training as leading trainers, should be considered.

Participant's recruitment and involvement

Participants' recruitment was observed and described by trainers and training participants as challenging and sometimes difficult, particularly in what relates to having, as intentionally planned, a multi-agency group of participants. Occasionally, ES&KW trainings were cancelled because there weren't sufficient practitioners registered. This was often explained and connected to the difficulty in reaching different services and cascading information.

The role of trainers and Regional facilitators in recruiting participants wasn't clearly defined leading to different situations, from none to some communication between them; nevertheless, this communication, when verified, occurred *during* or *after* the training, and not *before* in participants' recruitment.

The training's duration, designation and the content of the publicity itself was also pointed as possibly discouraging for participants recruitment.

Points for consideration - Participant's recruitment and involvement

First group of findings – "between vision and reality"

- *Since having multiagency training participants groups is considered fundamental for the training's proposed outcomes, it is important to (re)consider how to ensure that participants' recruitment, namely involving the Regional Facilitators and Trainers, is implemented as initially projected.*

Second group of findings – rethinking ES&KW projected training

- *To make ES&KW training more accessible to multi-agency participants and parents, it is important that in future training editions the duration and explanation of the contents are considered, involving a participative discussion and reflection that includes trainers, training participants and parents'.*

Family's involvement

Families' involvement characterizes Early Support since a fundamental element is the aim to closely work *with* families. Thus, Early Support recommends that families are deeply involved in ES&KW training, either as trainers or as participants.

This was clearly observed in all stages of the research, from Pilot trainings, to T4T and ES&KW trainings - from the 86 research participants, 27 were parent carers or family members to children and young children with SEND. Their participation and presence was of great value, as observed during trainings and expressed in diverse interviews and focus group discussions.

When Parent carers weren't present, trainers and training participants underlined how important their presence would have been in the trainings context.

As an alternative to parents' presence – or combined with it – the impact of videos with parents, children and young people with SEND sharing their story, were also described and observed as a good way of bringing their voices into the training.

On the other hand, the necessary preparation to optimise parents' participation - *before*, *during* and *after* the training – was also emphasised and recognized as an important requirement for its success, respecting the important principle of “not harming” parents involved. One trainer more emphatically focused the importance of this preparation, and suggested that this needed rethinking in the organization of the training.

Points for consideration - Family's involvement

First group of findings – “between vision and reality”

- *Since preparation to welcome parents as participants is crucial; it is important that trainers and Regional Facilitators are closely involved in participants' recruitment and that special attention is given to supporting parents as participants, as initially projected by Early Support.*
- *Considering the value of parents' participation, but also acknowledging that full thought should be given to the involvement of parent carers in training, either as trainers or as participants, concrete ways of helping to ensure this preparation seem fundamental.*

Second group of findings – rethinking ES&KW projected training

- *Since parents trained to be parent trainers are described as confident when sharing their experiences, whenever possible, these parents, besides being lead trainers, could also be co-trainers in ES&KW trainings, giving special meaning to the training's aims of promoting partnership and a family centered approach.*

ES&KW training sequence and contents

Training participants' views

When asked about the training's sequence and contents, several training participants described the ES&KW training as well structured and meaningful, underlining the effectiveness of its delivery model.

Other participants highlighted that there seemed to be a lot of activities proposed in a short period of time. They also recognized the challenge of “fitting” contents into a two days training that is aimed at a great diversity of participants', with diverse knowledge and experience about Early Support and Key Working.

Regarding the coherence between the two training days, participants proposed that contents related to Key Working (Day 2) should be placed in Day 1.

Training contents that were less addressed throughout the training delivery - namely supervision and multi-agency meetings - were also referenced, suggesting these should be discussed more fully, in view of their importance to Key Working.

Considering Key Working specific contents, participants' suggested that more examples would help understanding their translation into practice.

Training participants furthermore reflected about the constitution of the training group of participants and their range of experiences and knowledge in ES&KW - from none to substantial - an aspect related to the participants' recruitment previously observed. This was regarded as having an actual impact on the depth to which the contents were approached and discussed.

Trainers' views

When asked about the ES&KW trainings contents and sequence, trainers also expressed that Day 1 was particularly intense taking into consideration its many contents, and expressed their concern about the way they delivered the training.

In addition, trainers shared their views about particular aspects of the training's contents and sequence that might be transformed, with the aim of improving its projected outcomes. One of the most underlined views was the fact that Key Working contents were only addressed in Day 2. In fact, in all trainings observed, participants' expectations were predominantly and naturally - considering the trainings title and aims - related to understanding better what Key Working was and how it might impact their individual and team work with children and young people with SEND and their families.

Different suggestions were then presented - one proposal was to make this clear(er) to training participants when ES&KW training is presented, at the time of its dissemination. Moreover, although understanding the intention of having first common training day for ES&KW and Working in Partnership, other trainers suggested that there might be different options in the trainings *sequence* eventually benefiting training participants' knowledge of ES&KW approach.

It's also considered, since Key Working contents are only delivered on Day 2, that trainers and training participants don't have the chance of reflecting about them *between* the two training days.

One trainer was particularly precise when analysing training sessions, reflecting about their sequence and contents in relation with the trainings' outcomes. The transformation the course went through from two and a half days to two days was mentioned as one of the aspects that might explain why the course has very good contents that don't seem to clearly connect to each other or to Key Working training specific outcomes.

Trainers consensually considered Day 2 to be more consistent with the trainings aims and outcomes. Nevertheless, there is a strong suggestion to bring some of the specific Key Working contents from Day 2 to Day 1, for all the presented reasons.

All through ES&KW training observations, we witnessed the trainers' effort to be faithful to the trainings sequence – which was always maintained – but also to adjust the trainings contents

to the groups' characteristics and to their own approach to training, as recommended in "Introduction for trainers" (Early Support, 2013).

Points for consideration - ES&KW training sequence and contents

Second group of findings – rethinking ES&KW projected training

- *Following the trainers' and training participants' views, there are diverse perspectives to be considered about the ES&KW training sequence and contents, from the large number of contents in each training day to their sequence and relevance to the trainings outcomes. The most convergent and consistent proposal is that **Key Working specific contents should start to be approached in ES&KW training Day 1**. This points towards the need of rethinking the advantages of having a common first day of training for Key Working and Working in Partnership considering the obstacles identified by trainers and participants.*
- *In this reflection, the relation between ES&KW training sequence, contents and desired outcomes, where Key Working is central, should be clear to all implicated in the training, including:*
 - those responsible for constructing and developing the training;*
 - trainers who deliver it;*
 - and training participants - from the first moment they learn about the course in its dissemination and chose to register, to the training delivery itself.*

Training delivery

All trainers had a unique way of delivering the ES&KW training – their characteristics as trainers, their experience in training delivery and their knowledge about Early Support, created a personalized approach to training. All ES&KW training recommendations were present in trainers' deliveries but some were particularly observed:

- Trainer 1 was particularly successful in **keeping to time and maintaining momentum**. All sessions were completed, as well as most of the activities suggested in the trainers guide, with strong group participation. This intended balance required permanent reflection throughout training delivery.

Within this particular training, throughout each session, we observed participants becoming progressively more willing to share their experiences and thoughts with the group. In fact, some group members, besides being professionals, were also family members of children and young people with SEND revelling it along the training. From this attitude of trust, a more supportive and collaborative training atmosphere emerged.

Trainer 1 recognized the group's transformation throughout the two training days, and reflected about the impact of group dynamic, the importance of understanding participants' thoughts and perspectives and about confrontation, as keystones of that transformation. This sensitive and attentive way of working, was namely observed during a critical incident.

- Trainer 2 particularly explored with participants the meaning they attributed to each of the trainings contents, **capturing participants' views and decisions and feedback**. Very well

organized and prepared, all the training process was registered and shared with participants, and activities were built on their perspectives and thoughts', aiming for their complete understanding of what was being discussed. Consequently, some activities were more deeply explored than others, in favour of this approach that underlines a participant led dynamic process in training.

This was possibly the reason why the Focus Group discussion following this training was particularly suggestive about the trainings process, contents, their pertinence and sequence – it was clear for participants the 'what and why' of each of the training components.

- Finally, Trainer 3 was a parent and a trainer and therefore the trainers' own parenting experiences were transversally present in all activities, along with experiences of working with other families in similar situations (**Family Involvement**). When reflecting about being a parent and a trainer, the challenge of integrating both roles in training was shared, emphasizing the intention of giving professionals a parent's view based on a parent journey, in a non-judgmental way, believing all professionals want to do their best to help children and families.

We also observed how this trainer particularly encouraged participants to apply contents to their practice **using local experiences and practices**, consistently bringing them to the training dynamic. Frequently during training Trainer 3 highlighted the good work the group was doing locally and encouraged participants to influence other professionals to take the Early Support and Key Working approach, namely those working in other areas and with young people.

Finally, it's important to point out the fact that it was this trainer's first ES&KW training delivery. Specifically on Day1, we frequently observed moments when T3 needed to consult the training guides during training delivery. The motivation to follow the training guides – sessions, activities and trimmings previewed – was clearly present but the groups' dynamic and training approach, was unevenly achieved on the training's first day. This brings us to the importance of having an experienced co-trainer at least on the first training deliveries, to support the trainer's confidence.

Points for consideration - Training delivery

First group of findings – “between vision and reality”

ES&KW training recommendations were largely present in trainers' deliveries but some were particularly observed, revealing each trainer's singular strengths in ES&KW training delivery.

Closely observing the three different trainers' – with diverse training delivery experience and knowledge about Early Support – underlines the importance of Training for Trainers (T4T), to reinforce the trainers' capacity to prepare, deliver and reflect about their delivery. It is particularly important, as previously proposed, that at least in the initial stages of training delivery, an experienced trainer can co-train to support the new ES&KW trainer.

After the ES&KW training - Participants' voices

Early Support and Key Working training impact considered through reflective practice

Reflective Practice helped participants revisit training's contents in a continued way, echoing the trainings' impact on themselves and on their work with children and young children with

SEND, their families and other professionals. Reflective Practice revealed concrete links between participants' beliefs, goals and practices and ES&KW contents, connecting their vision – what they would like to accomplish in their work with children and young children with SEND, their families and other professionals – and present reality – what seems to prevent them from achieving it. Their reflections highlighted the impact of ES&KW training in different dimensions: from a personal to a professional dimension; from a team work and management dimension to Key Working with families.

Considering the extent to which ES&KW training impacted on participants with previous experience and knowledge about ES&KW, some participants highlighted the reassurance it gave them about the way they were conducting their practices, although affirming it didn't necessarily change it. Yet, other experienced participants in ES&KW underlined specific training contents that were particularly important to reframe their practice.

When asked to concretely reflect about ES&KW trainings' impact in the future, namely in participants' organizations, but also in their own practices and in the practices of their co-workers, one participant highlighted the aim of expanding the concepts and practices of ES&KW to health and social care domains. The same training participant also stressed the need to work on crucial skills to empower practitioners' approach to children, young children, families and other professionals, in non-judgmental, person-centered way, affirming the use of ES&KW principles and specific parts of the training to address this aim.

Points for consideration - ES&KW training impact through reflective practice

First group of findings – “between vision and reality”

Considering the positive impact of the Reflective Practice process, and since several participants revealed during training observations that they didn't do the Pre or Interim readings' proposed by Early Support, it seems essential that they are motivated and supported to do so, in order to develop training awareness and its practical transference.

Second group of findings – rethinking ES&KW projected training

A follow up mentoring work should also be considered, including continued Reflective Practice and periodical support, after the ES&KW training. This is an internationally recommended evidence based practice in favor of training's concrete impact and materialization into professionals' practices. Without it training impact might fade.

It is important to consider and evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of offering the same training to practitioners and parents with different experience and knowledge about ES&KW.

Key Working functions throughout Families' voices

To understand the impact of Key Working on families' and children's well being and quality of life, in the final stage of the research, we interviewed families that training participants worked with as Key workers or co-key workers. All families had children with complex additional needs, requiring “a high level of support from a wide range of statutory and/or specialist and targeted services, to help them achieve the best possible outcomes” (Early Support, Trainers'

guide day 1, 2013), thus particularly benefiting from the Key Working support. We looked at these families' thoughts and experiences about Key Working, linking them with the **Key Working 'functions'**.

Emotional and practical support

Families were pleased to share their views about Key Working and to participate in the research; they underlined their knowledgeable role in defining the impact of a Key Working approach.

The Key Working function of "Providing emotional and practical support as required, as part of a trusting relationship", seemed to underpin other Key Working functions in most interviews – although all functions were highlighted by the interviewed families, this trusting relation was foundational for other Key Working functions to emerge; families go beyond the Key workers' formal role and functions to focus on the trustful relation established between them.

Felling respected and listened to seems fundamental in building this trustful relation. When families speak about their key workers they emphasize what their life was like *before* and *after* the Key Working support. Feelings of deep loneliness and distress are progressively contrasted with feelings of hope and a sense of security in being supported to face complex circumstances.

Families also underlined the importance of having the emotional and practical support when they need it and stress their confidence to ask their key workers all sorts of questions.

Through two of these interviews, we also understood that key workers work *with* families, helping them to understand what's involved in particular situations, so they can face them autonomously in similar future circumstances.

During the interviews, families shared several important moments when they felt enabled and empowered by their key workers to make their own decisions. These are aligned with the respectful and trustful relationship established. One particular case illustrates how the key worker supported the use of a personalized budget, in the most effective way *for the family*; it was only in the course of the key worker approach that this family was heard and respected in *their choice*.

We acknowledged through family interviews that key workers strive to support families' concrete needs aiming to build a trustful relation where families' strengths are central.

Coordination

All families underlined the importance of key Working functions around coordination. Because their children have multiple and complex needs a large number of professionals are involved in supporting them. This coordination involves having a single point of regular and consistent contact for families and their child/children.

Families shared with us the importance Key Working had in their capacity to organize and make sense of the multiple appointments and services related to their children; nevertheless, as previously underlined this initial intensive support progressively changes enabling them to become more confident about this organization. Families also emphasize the importance of having a regular and consistent contact to face difficult situations around services, when all their individual efforts seem hopeless.

Key workers' skills and competence to facilitate multi-agency meetings are also highlighted and appreciated as fundamental in family's lives. Coordinating services and practitioners around the child, young person and family was also singularly emphasized.

One family highlighted how positive and empowering it was to have services organized around their particular needs, and valued the fact their family has a key worker and a co-key worker, acknowledging that it is also important that they can support each other in their demanding Key Working functions.

Planning and assessment

These Key Working group of functions were the less mentioned in an explicit way, although they were implicitly linked with other Key Working functions, namely with those related to Coordination.

One family highlighted the importance of having the key worker's support to materialize planning in everyday life.

Another family, on the other hand, underlined the gap between what is planned and done to support her child and the continuous scientific advancements/research. This interviewed mother explained that, in her perspective, the National Health System (NHS) only *manages a condition*, failing to address her son's real health needs, in an optimal time for him.

Several of the interviewed families highlighted the key worker role in supporting, directly or indirectly, all family members - direct support particularly involved children's siblings; indirect support was brought up about housing support or the use of personal budgets, that increased the quality of each family's life.

Information and specialist support

Providing information and signposting is underlined by all families interviewed as essential. As previously presented, for most families there is a time *before* and *after* Key Working – their Key workers stand for clarity and consistency about services and practical support to families.

The power of information and specialist support on children's and families' lives is also clear when the interviewed families describe how new knowledge and materials impacted in their child's development and in their well being.

Families also expressed their hope and trust concerning their child's near future, based on choices done with professionals and their key worker's.

Families in addition shared their views about what helped them feeling supported and empowered. Many of the referred subjects – from parent and community support groups to the empowerment of families themselves – are closely connected to the Key Working functions, namely of information and signposting that meets each family needs.

Points for consideration - Key Working functions throughout Families' voices

- *When describing their life experience **before** having the Key Working support, families shared a sense of deep uncertainty and lowliness. They stressed how they need professionals - from health, education or social care, and regardless their hierarchical position - to work together, between them and with families, listening and aiming to understand their concrete hopes, strengths and needs.*

- *This underlines the importance of reaching and having multi-agency practitioners in ES&KW training, namely increasing health and social care professionals' participation, to empower a common vision and language based on the Early Support ethos and principles and on Key Working functions.*
- *It is also important to consider that all the interviewed families had children with complex additional needs, requiring "a high level of support from a wide range of statutory and/or specialist and targeted services, to help them achieve the best possible outcomes" (Early Support, Trainers' guide day 1, 2013), thus particularly benefiting from an intense Key Working support, here materialized by their designated key workers or co-key workers.*

Although the trainings' learning outcomes are closely connected to the perspective of Key Working as a set of functions, rather than defining it as a (key worker) role, it is important to recognize that Key Working services - including designated 'key workers', whose job is exclusively confined to Key Working - can be valuable and necessary for children and families requiring a high level of support, even when practitioners are "working to families' strengths and capitalizing on their resilience" (Early Support, 2012), which was clearly the observed case in this research. Thus, in addition to the fundamental perspective that all professionals' should provide children and families' with a Key Working support, each child's, young person and family's concrete needs and strengths should be basis for the decision of the amount of dedication and time needed to support them; consequently non-designated key workers – namely professionals chosen among a team working with a child with complex needs – should have in their job description the knowledge, skills, competence and time consigned for this high level of support.

Final considerations

Key Working has proven to be crucial for families with children and young people with SEND. Families interviewed in this research once more accentuate it. This evidence underlines the importance of ES&KW training in supporting professionals from all domains and parents to develop and build their understanding of Key Working, namely of the Key Working functions, so they can truly fulfill them.

Early Support's approach to Key Working, which is coherent and consistent with the contemporary conceptual and evidenced based evidence of Special Education and Inclusion and Early Childhood Intervention, underlines the relevance of ES&KW training for professionals and parent carers.

After this initial period of ES&KW training delivery, with positive impact for all participants - even though in different ways (i.e. mostly reassuring or transformational) - the possibility of revisiting it now considering its strengths but also some identified barriers to Key Working training's successful outcomes, seems central to understand what might have been lost between the trainings intended aims and its delivery, and why it occurred. This reflection is also essential for Early Support to reaffirm or adjust the trainings intentions and aims and, accordantly, to review the training's contents and processes, closely monitoring its delivery.

To realize the ES&KW trainings vision a “Team around the training” is needed; all involved with Key Working - from families to health, social care and education professionals’ and managers - should continue to support the discussion and reflection with those developing the training, in a partnership approach, helping to harmonize the trainings aims and contents with their concrete strengths and needs.

With this research, we hope to have contributed to Early Support’s important intention of, through ES&KW training, coming closer to the vision of having the uniqueness of children, young people and families respected and acknowledged, promoting families well-being and allowing them to have a partnership support approach.

Introduction

Certainly the disciplinary and clinical knowledge that you bring to interactions with families, whether it is health, social work, or child development, should be utilized to the fullest extent. It is what has brought you to work with this family.

However, *the manner* in which it is used is critical in whether that expertise has any true effect. It can be used in a manner that affirms a child and family's competence, or in a manner that diminishes that competence.

Edgar Shein, 2009

Scope and purpose

This research aims to analyze the specific contents, processes and delivery of Early Support and Key Working training and understand its initial impact on training participants – parent carers and practitioners (from Health, Social Services, Education and Voluntary Sectors) working with children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families¹.

In harmony with the contemporary international conceptual frame in Special Education and Early Childhood Intervention, Early Support's Key Working training seeks to enable *a way of working* that, is family, child and young person centred (Early Support, 2012):

[a way of working that] helps practitioners and managers to put the child, young person and their family at the centre of holistic, coordinated and seamless service delivery; supports children, young people and their families to take control of their lives . . . and provides the context in which services can work in an integrated way within a single assessment and planning process.

Early Support was originally developed by Government in 2003-2009 as a national programme for children with SEND under five.

At present, the Department for Education Green Paper on SEND (2011) identified and recognized Early Support as a key approach to meeting the needs of children, young people and families². Considering its positive results, Early Support is being extended up the age range – from birth to 25.

¹ Although the present proposal concerns this specific training approach, it emerged, in an articulated and integrated way, from a wider post-doctoral investigation, financed by the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) whose mission consists in promoting the advancement of scientific and technological knowledge in Portugal. It is supervised in the UK by Professor Geoff Lindsay, at CEDAR, University of Warwick.

The post-doctoral research aims to establish Recommended Practices for high quality training and personnel preparation in Early Childhood Intervention.

Early Support seems to be at the heart of in-service training for professionals working on the field of Early Childhood Intervention and Special Education, conferring it a particular research interest in the scenario of the post-doctoral research proposal.

² The Green Paper identifies that Early Support is "highly regarded by parents and professionals alike and has been proven to make a significant difference to families" (2011,p.43), underlining the programme independent evaluation by Manchester University (2006) where it was "found to have positive effects on the quality of service provision, the wellbeing of families and the appropriate support and development of disabled children. By 2009 over 10,000 families had used this service in the early years." (2011,p.43).

Thus, Early Support is currently a core partner supporting the implementation of the strategy detailed in Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability, the Government's 2011 Green Paper. This led to an Early Support training proposal, including:

- Modular approach with different pathways³
- Key Working training – two days training, free at point of delivery
- Capacity building model for training for trainers

Early Support is underpinned by ten fundamental principles, with the goal of:

- Improving the delivery of services for children and young people with additional needs and their families;
- Enabling services to better coordinate their activity;
- Ensuring the service delivery is child, young people and family centered and that services and practitioners work in partnerships with families.

It promotes Key Working as a way of providing a single point of contact and continuity of care and support for children, young people and families.

The Department for Education, through The Green Paper (2011), recognizes and underlines the importance of this approach to families, funding voluntary and community sector to offer free training on Key Working to diverse practitioners:

In order to extend the use of key workers for families with disabled children, we need more people to be trained as key workers from a wider field of professionals with relevant knowledge about working with families and about disabled children and children with SEN. The Department for Education will fund the voluntary and community sector to provide free training on key working for a range of professionals. (p.43-44)

According to this present framework, the specific objectives for this research, on the subject of Early Support and Key Working training, are:

- Understanding how Early Support and Key Working training principles and contents relate to the existing body of knowledge regarding to training in Early Childhood Intervention and Special Education**, based on a comprehensive review of relevant literature and on the emergent assumptions of its theoretical/conceptual framework;
- Understanding how contents are delivered to providers of multi-agency groups (approaches/process), with diverse roles (across disciplines), and parents**, regarding its principles and goals - including trainers preparation for this training delivery.
- Understand the impact of this training on the providers' (Health, Social Services, Education, Voluntary sector and parents/carers) motivation and ability/competence to**

³ Practitioners; Parent carers – two routes, general training and/or parents' workshops; Young people – young people's workshops; Key working; Material users – e.g. how to use the MAPIT, how to use developmental journals, etc.

- facilitate early and coordinated assessment, planning, intervention and evaluation in partnership with parents/carers and young people - constructing a single Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP);
 - provide a preventive and protective person-centered response to help families and young people live 'ordinary lives'.
- d. Understand the **impact of Key Working on families, children and young peoples' well being and quality of life** – impact on their real needs and strengths;

Thus, this investigation will help increase understanding of the impact of Early Support and Key Working specific training on different providers – especially in *the way they work together and with families/young people*. Having a broad, national impact, the training can promote the dissemination of fundamental Special Education (SE) and Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) principles and actions, supported by evidence based research and practices, empowering the collaboration between practitioners and families.

Since it aims to bring new insights from the participants' vision of the training and its impact, through their "eyes and hearts" (Krueger & Casey, 2009) - learning how participants see, understand and value the training, and revealing its concrete impact on their professional life and on the life of families, children and young people with SEND they work with - the methodology chosen is qualitative.

Although studies conducted in the UK emphasize training as a key factor in the success of the ECI and SE (Allen, 2011; Davis, 2007; DfE, 2011; Limbrick, 2009, Lindsay et al., 2011), there aren't specific recommended practices in this area, pointing out to the necessity of its development. This research will potentially be beneficial to the development and improvement of training materials and training delivery, conducting to future establishment of recommended practices for personnel preparation in this field.

Context of study

Theoretical and conceptual framework - Early Childhood Intervention and Special/Inclusive Education

Every life journey begins with pregnancy and birth. In the first years of life Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) services and supports are crucial for vulnerable children and their families. As Shonkoff and Meisels (2000) highlight:

It is the mission of early childhood intervention to help young children and their families to thrive. The fundamental challenge that faces early intervention services is to merge the knowledge and insights of scholars and practitioners with the creative talents of those who design and implement social policy initiatives and to invest the products of this alliance in the future of our children and thereby in the well-being of our society as a whole. (p.3)

This principle is also stated in 'Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability', when it underlines that "identifying children's support needs early is vital if they are to thrive, and enables parents and professionals to put the right approach in place quickly" (DfE, 2011, p. 6).

To achieve this central goal in ECI, authors and associations (Bruder, 2010; Dunst & Trivette, 2009; EADSNE, 2010; Guralnick, 2005; Klein & Gilkerson, 2000; McWilliam, 2005; Sandall et al. 2005), based on research and scientific evidence, distinguish a set of principles that underpin current best concepts and practices in this field, namely (a) a family-centered intervention, (b) based on a collaborative process, (c) held in inclusive, natural learning environments, perceived in a bioecological, transactional and systemic perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Sameroff & Fiese, 2000).

This systemic, complex perspective that contextualizes our current understanding of ECI must also involve and support those working with to children over six, young people with Special Educational Needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families. Although needs are singular and unique to each child and family and diverse in each life stage, the assumptions and approach that underlines providers' work with children and families should be universal, across ages, since, simultaneously, there are needs common to all (Norwich, 2005) – a family centred approach should be extended to a young person centred approach; collaborative, transdisciplinary ECI processes are needed through all age ranges to support children, young people and families in their well being and capacity to live “ordinary lives”; the inclusive, natural environment, consistently chosen as best for children from birth to six, is the environment we aspire for young people and adults with SEND, so they can “live as independently and healthily as they are able to and be active members of their communities” (DfE, 2011, p.11).

Since Early Support and Key Working are exactly addressed to working with children and young people from birth to 25 and their families, it integrates the ECI state of the art with Special/Inclusive Education (SIE) contemporary conceptual perspectives. This challenges us to open boundaries and amplifies our conceptual vision, focusing on each person life project, in its ecological contexts; aiming to truly empower and enable them to master their own lives.

Phenomena under study

In England, issues related to ECI and SIE were subject to new government recommendations for its action (DfE, 2011, 2012). This socio-political framework constitutes a challenge and opportunity to promote high quality services to a diverse group of children and young people – from birth to 25 years - and their families.

In this framework, training and personnel preparation are critical elements for success, demanding a renovation in the providers' attitude, towards the new intervention requirements. These involve technical quality - regarding knowledge, expertise and competence held by the professional in this field - but also the practical and reflective expression of this competence, founded in empathic qualities of collaborative involvement, leading to a transdisciplinary provision of services, focusing on family and their natural context (Brazelton & Sparrow, 2003; Dunst, 1996; Klein & Gilkerson, 2000).

Since the DfE will fund the voluntary and community sector to provide free training on Key Working for a variety of professionals (DfE, 2011), the possibility of listening to participants' voices will enable us to understand the range of ideas and feelings practitioners and families

have about this training and its impact, and understand some of the factors that can influence behavior and motivation to act according to the trainings principles and purposes.

Methodology

The research methodology is built upon its research aims – to understand the participants' points of view, their perspectives about Early Support and Key Working (ES&KW) training (contents, processes, delivery) and its concrete impact on their work with other professionals and with children, young people with SEND, and their families. It also aims to listen to families that experienced this approach.

Considering the research objectives, its method seeks to bring a source of “well grounded, rich descriptions and explanations in identifiable local contexts” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.1), where words intend to translate the concrete, vibrant world of the participants, aiming to find relationships between the phenomenon's observed and analyzed, looking for what brings and links them together (regularities; sequences), but also for what characterizes them in their singularity. If understanding and bringing light to that understanding is what we seek, then we have to capture “data on the local actors ‘from the inside’, through a process of deep attentiveness, of empathetic understanding (*Verstehen*), and of suspending . . . preconceptions about the topics on discussion.” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.6).

The qualitative approach and the research methodology are, therefore, closely connected to the study objectives (Appendix 1 – Qualitative Approach). Methods include document analysis, observations, focus groups discussions, reflective practice and interviews.

Research design and participants

The research was developed in different stages, in a chronological approach, closely connected to the sequence of the research objectives (Figure 1), involving:

- **Document Analysis** of training contents, from first Key Working training drafts to final documentation (June 2012 to January 2013);
- **Observation** of five Key Working trainings, including two Pilots, in the English regions of East Midlands, South West, South East and North and South London, where training was carried out in cities, towns and villages (July 2012 to June 2013) (Appendix 2 - Extract from ES&KW training observations)
- **Observation** of a Trainer for Trainers training (September, 2012)
- Three **focus group discussions** with training participants (February to July 2013) (Appendix 3 – Questioning route for Focus Group discussion)
- Thirteen **in-depth interviews**, including Interviews with trainers, training participants and families they work with (February to August 2013) (Appendix 4 – Questioning routes for Interviews)
- Three **questionnaires** to Pilot training Participants (August 2013) (Appendix 4 – Questioning routes for Interviews)

- **Reflective practice** by five training participants (February to July, 2013) (Appendix 5 – Reflective Practice)

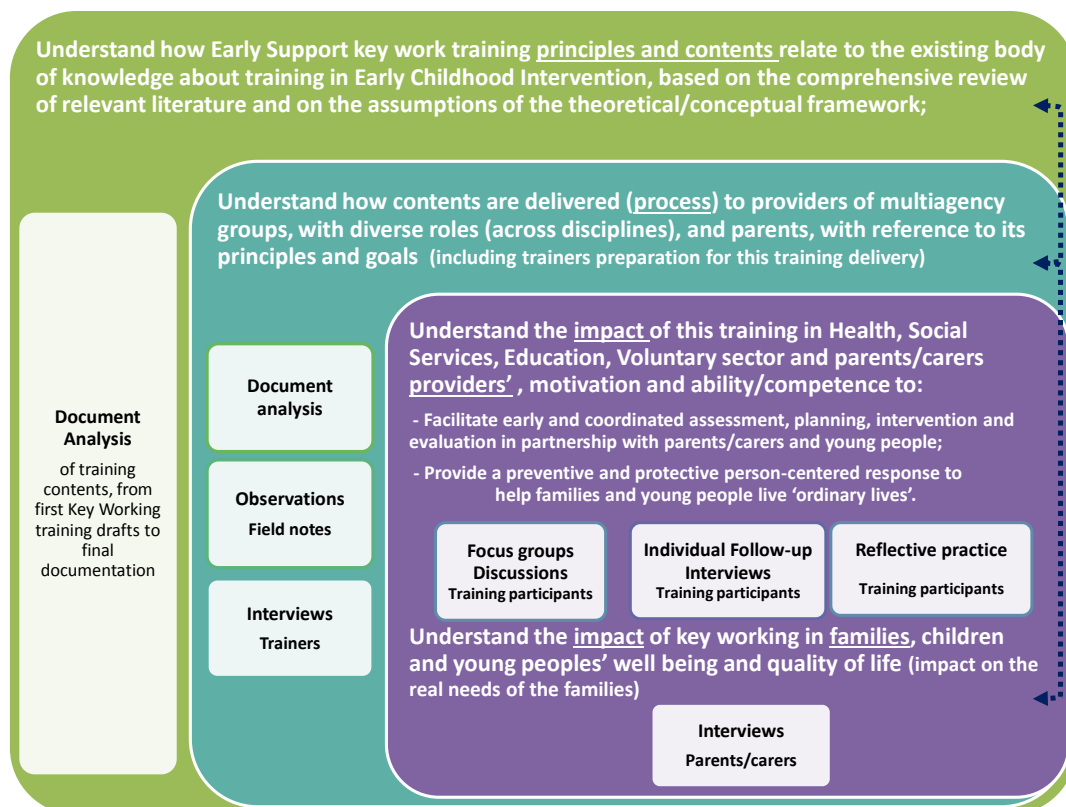


Figure 1. Synthesis of different stages and research activities in a systemic approach

Considering the different stages of the research, including training observations and interviews, there were 86 participants involved (Table 1) (Appendix 6 - Participants data)

Table 1.
Research participants

Observations	Participants		
	Trainers	Training participants	Of which family members
Training for Trainers (T4T)	2	11	4
Training for Trainers total		<i>n=13</i>	
Early Support and Key Working training			
Pilots			
East Midlands (Pilot 1)	1*	17	1
South West (Pilot 2)	1	16	10
		<i>n=34</i>	
'Formal' training			
North London	1*	13	3
South London	1*	12	2
South East England	1*	8	2
		<i>n=33</i>	<i>n=22</i>
Families interviewed	5 families interviewed; Members involved - 6		
		<i>n=6</i>	
Training participants total		<i>n=86</i>	<i>n=27</i>

*Also participant in T4T

Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues were considered throughout all the research stages, aiming to build and maintain trust, mutual respect and fairness regarding all participants.

Being a qualitative research study, its purpose was to bring new insights from the participants' vision of the training and its impact, through their 'eyes and hearts', learning how participants see, understand and value the training. This approach is coherent with the Early Intervention and Special Education conceptual framework – collaborative, person-centred, and non-judgmental – and its methods are intentionally related to them.

In this context, as Bresler (2006, p.16) underlines, “traditional procedures (consent forms) and requirements (anonymity) are no longer sufficient. While these are necessary bureaucratic technicalities, they do not address the issue of connections and empathy.”

This insight demanded a continuous reflective process that simultaneously implicated: understanding the phenomena under study, assuring trusting and caring relationships with participants and describing them with respect and dignity; looking into our own values and beliefs, which created a particular perspective about the research, and being opened to new perspectives throughout the research process; and, finally, communicating the research process and findings to others, caring about the ethics of the message; this involved the different gestures of “zooming out,” “taking in,” and “broadening out” (Bresler, 2006, p.14); a demanding process where great learning took place.

This project was fully approved by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Sub-Committee (HSSREC), University of Warwick. (Appendix 7 – Consent forms for trainers, training participants and families)

2. The Early Support and Key Working training model and approach

Real learning gets to the heart of what it means to be human.
Through learning we re-create ourselves.

Peter Senge, 2006

Theoretical base, principles and learning outcomes

The Early Support and Key Working (ES&KW) training model combines the concepts of Early Support and Key Working. **Early Support** is presented as *a way of working*, underpinned by 10 principles⁴ (Figure 2), aiming to improve the way services are delivered to children and young people with Special Educational Needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families. These principles focus on ensuring a **person centered approach** (i.e., child, young person and family-centred service delivery) and that practitioner's work in **partnership** with children, young people and their families.

-
1. The uniqueness of children, young people and families is valued and provided for.
 2. A single multi-agency assessment, planning and review process is provided and delivered in partnership with children, young people and families, facilitated by key working support where appropriate.
 3. Service delivery is holistic, coordinated and seamless.
 4. Continuity of care is maintained through different stages of a child's life and through their preparation for adulthood.
 5. Children and young people's learning and development is monitored and promoted.
 6. Children, young people and families are able to make informed choices.
 7. Wherever possible, families, children and young people are able to live 'ordinary lives'.
 8. Children, young people and families are involved in shaping, developing and evaluating the services they use.
 9. Multi-agency working practices and systems are integrated.
 10. Children, young people and families can be confident that the people working with them have appropriate training, skills, knowledge and experience.
-

Figure 2. Ten Early Support Principles

Through **Key Working**, Early Support aims to ensure that services are enabled to coordinate their activity providing families with a single point of contact and continuity of care and support.

The trainings' **learning outcomes** (Figure 3) are closely connected to the perspective of Key Working as a set of functions, rather than defining it as a (key worker) role (Early Support, 2012):

Key working support provides a navigator, an enabler, a coordinator. The overall aim of key working is to ensure the provision of holistic care and support to meet the individual requirements and aspirations of the child, young person and their family. The care and support should be family centered, not only child-centered. The individual offering key working support should strive for an open and supportive relationship with the child/young person and their family, and this should be developed through regular and proactive contact. (p.5)

⁴ These principles are entirely coherent and consistent with the contemporary conceptual and evidenced based evidence of Special Education and Inclusion and Early Childhood Intervention, presented in the introduction.

Thus, instead of an additional service, it is aimed to become a way of working⁵, defined by a set of functions that can be carried out by an extensive range of practitioners or by parent carers or young people themselves.

-
- Understand key working functions
 - Understand how the principles of Early Support influence key working
 - Be able to use relevant skills and knowledge to implement key working
 - Identify why it is important for practitioners to understand the experiences of disabled children and young people and those with other additional needs and their families
 - Explain partnership working with disabled children, young people and those with other additional needs and their families and with other agencies
 - Explain how to use reflection to improve their own key working practice
-

Figure 3. Learning outcomes ES&KW training

The ES&KW training model uses the Family Partnership Model, developed by Hilton Davis, Crispin Day and Christine Bidmead and others⁶, as a theoretical base. In this Model, the relationship between parents and those helping them is based on partnership, defined by “mutual participation shared power, involving the expertise of both partners, agreement about aims and process, negotiation, mutual respect and trust, and open and honest communication” (Davis, 2007). Linked with the Family Partnership Model is a detailed training program (Family Partnership Training Programme), in which training facilitators seek to embody the principles they teach, relating to training participants in the same way they want them to relate to the families they work with (Davis, 2007; Moore, 2006).

Based on the Family Partnership Model, the ES&KW training also considers that “the qualities, values, principles, ethos and skills of trainers needed to facilitate learning in this course are very much the same as those needed by parent carers/young people and practitioners to work effectively in partnership.” (Early Support, Introduction for trainers, 2013).

This theoretical base, principles and Key Working definition sustain all ES&KW training, namely in what concerns:

- 1. Trainers’ recruitment, preparation and training**
- 2. Participants’ recruitment and involvement**
- 3. Families involvement**
- 4. Training sequence and contents**
- 5. Training delivery**

⁵ It is not suggested that key working services (namely designated ‘key workers’, whose job is exclusively confined to key working) are not valuable or necessary, but that it should be related to all practitioners working with children and young children with SEND and their families. Since Key working has proven to be truly valuable to families, it should be “everyone’s responsibility to ensure children, young people and families have key working support from a named individual, whoever that individual might be” (Early Support, 2012, p.6)

⁶ Parent Advisor Training Manual - Davis, H., Day, C., and Bidmead, C; 2002; and Working in Partnership with ES: The Parent Adviser Model - Davis, H., Day, C., and Bidmead, C., 2002.

These essential aspects of the ES&KW training will now be presented based on the documentation produced by the Central Early Support team. The intentions contained in these documents⁷ will be the lens to observe and understand the products of the research.

ES&KW training central topics

1) Trainers' recruitment, assessment process and training

Development Day for Early Support trainers

In May 2012, a group of 26 potential Early Support and Key Working trainers was invited by the Central Early Support team (CEST) to participate in the Development Day for Early Support trainers.

The invitation to join this event was based on the assessment of trainers CV's (sent to CEST by those interested in applying to be trainers) against the general Early Support trainer person specification (Figure 4). This was the first condition to be accepted in the pool of potential trainers.

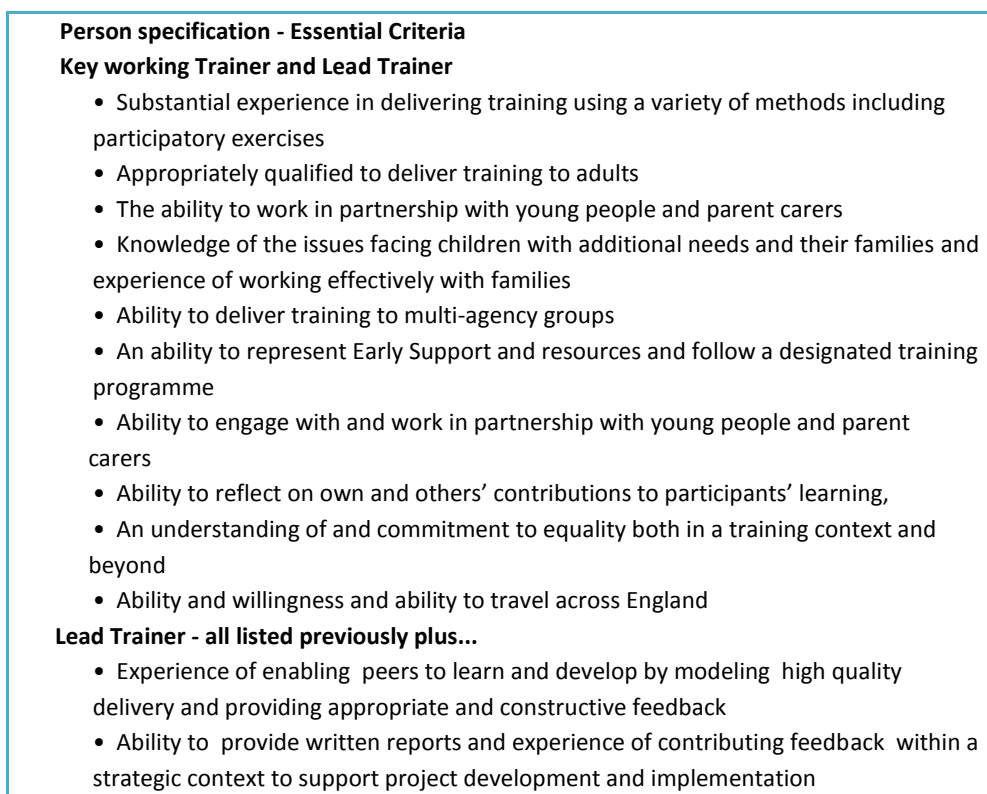


Figure 4. Person specification and essential criteria for Key Working Trainer and Lead Trainer

⁷ Early Support Key Working in Practice and Working in Partnership through Early Support training - Introduction for trainers (January, 2013); Early Support Key Working in Practice and Working in Partnership through Early Support training - Trainers' guide day 1 - The Early Support Principles in Practice (September, 2012; January, 2013); Early Support Key Working in Practice training - Trainers' guide Day 2 (September, 2012; January, 2013)

The Development Day aimed to provide opportunities for planning future involvement, including information about the delivery model and timescale. There was also a chance to demonstrate, through group work tasks, the level of familiarity with and understanding of Early Support, aiming to help assess any individual development needs, such as initial shadowing, going forward. It also aimed to help the CEST to get to know those they have not worked with before.

For those interested in becoming lead trainers, a further assessment against the lead trainer person specification was required, as well as a supporting statement concerning suitability for the lead trainer role. Those selected as lead trainers were invited to the first tranche of training for trainers on June 2012 and provided support to the second tranche of training from September 2012.

Trainer for Trainers

In the first phase of the assessment process, the CEST only used the development day activities for potential ES&KW trainers' assessment and development feedback. However, during the pilot phase of the training (July to September 2012) it became clear to the CEST - from observations of the training and from feedback from pilot trainers - that it would be useful to extend the assessment and development process to the Training for Trainers (T4T).

This aimed to give potential ES&KW trainers the maximum opportunity to show that they met all of Early Support trainers' criteria and that appropriate development opportunities could be identified for each trainer. For those who attended the Development day in May this was additional process.

To give potential trainers the chance to do some preparation before T4T, they were asked to prepare for delivery of specific sections of the trainers guide⁸, giving opportunity to think through the training in some detail before coming to the T4T. During T4T, potential ES&KW trainers worked in small groups to deliver parts of those sections.

Early Support Key Working in Practice - Introduction for trainers

The 'Introduction for Trainers' – common to Early Support Key Working Training and Working in Partnership through Early Support Training - is presented as a document that "must be read by all trainers before delivering any of the Early Support Key Working Training or the Working in Partnership through Early Support Training" and "should be revisited before any subsequent delivery" (Early Support, Introduction for trainers, 2013).

⁸ To give trainers the chance to do some preparation before the T4T, they were asked to have a look at the trainers' guide for Day 1 of the Key Working training and pay particular attention to **Section 5 (Working in partnership) and Section 6 (Working together to improve outcomes for children and young people with additional need and their families)**; they were then asked to prepare those two sections as if they were going to deliver them to a group of participants. On the first day of the training, trainers were put into groups with other trainers and asked to deliver part/s of those two sections, but not knowing which part/s until the training day.

Although each training day has its own trainers' guide, it is here underlined that these should not be seen as constraining, but providing guidance and suggestions on the approach to use, slides to present and activities to run during training. It is emphasized that, when using the guides, trainers should bring both skills and experience to the training process and use these to adapt the training to ensure that it meets the needs of the training group and of the local area in the most appropriate way.

To make their own decisions about training delivery, trainers must ensure:

- spending plenty of time before each of the training days thinking through about their training approach and making the necessary alterations to slides, activities etc.
- planning to fulfil the aims and learning outcomes of the training – particularly if participants are taking the accredited route⁹ – though considering that the aims and learning outcomes do not necessarily have to be fulfilled in the way suggested in the trainer guides;

The training structure is then introduced and diverse fundamental topics about the training are presented, highlighting *the way* trainers should understand them and use them. These include: The course and its approach; Facilitation guidelines; Background reading; Delivery and general issues; Explanation of the format for the trainers' notes and Overview of the Early Support resources. Table 2 includes the main subjects of each one of the documents' contents. These will be presented later in this chapter.

Table 2

'Introduction for trainers' Contents (Early Support, Introduction for trainers, 2013)

Contents	Aiming for trainers to understand that:
The course and its approach	Training is underpinned by the Early Support principles and the notion of partnership is a central element
Facilitation guidelines	Trainers should model the helping process Trainings should be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Participant-led – Conducted in the spirit of partnership
Background reading	The Early Support and Key Working approach and the use of the Early Support resources should be thoroughly recognized
Delivery and general issues	Trainers should be actively involved in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Delivering and monitoring pre-course information to training participants – Involving families – Keeping to time and maintaining momentum – Organizing physical space and seating arrangements – Capturing participants' views and decisions and feedback

⁹ "Early Support Accreditation Achievement for All 3As, the Early Support Consortium, and the University of Cumbria are working in a new and unique collaboration to offer the opportunity for graduates who have completed the Early Support Key Working and/or Working in Partnership training to have their learning recognised as part of an academic award. This award is a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCert) which is at Masters degree level (Level 7). The programme is being piloted in the academic year starting September 2013, with a planned rollout of a fully accredited framework at Levels 4 to 7 from September 2014."

<http://www.cumbria.ac.uk/Courses/SubjectAreas/Education/ContinuingProfessionalDevelopment/EarlySupportAccreditation.aspx>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Using the participant activity sheets – Using local materials – Advocating for anti-discrimination, equality, diversity and inclusion – Mastering terminology used and avoiding jargon
Explanation of the format for the trainers' notes	Trainer's notes should only be used as information to prepare training and help making a time plan
Overview of the ES resources	Trainers should be familiar with all Early Support Resources ¹⁰

Full reading and comprehension of this Manual for trainers is fundamental to help trainers develop the skills and ability to reflect on own and others' contributions to the trainings outcomes and to meet the demanding aim of relating to training participants in the same way they want them to relate to the families they work with (Davies 2007; Moore, 2006).

2. Participants' recruitment and involvement

CEST strongly recommends trainers to “**only**¹¹ train multi-agency groups, with parent carers and possibly young people represented amongst your participants” (Early Support, Introduction for trainers, 2013). Emphasis is given to the fact that the aims of the training can only be successfully achieved if has the right mix of participants, including representatives from Health, Social Services, Education, and voluntary sector organisations and parent carers and possibly other family members and advocates if required.

To reach the ultimate aim of improving services for families - changing practice and systems towards multi-agency, integrated, parent carer and child and young person-centred approaches - sharing experiences, practice examples, learning, values, principles and approaches amongst a mixed training group in order to achieve the ultimate, is underlined as essential.

It is then stressed that, in preparation for the ES&KW training, trainers may need time and a lot of effort to have this multi-agency training group, including parent carers along with young people, if appropriate. Trainers can “use a multi-agency training team, with parent carers and possibly young people as lead or co-trainers” (Early Support, Introduction for trainers, 2013), involving the training team in recruitment and thus facilitating the attraction of a wider range of participants.

3. Families Involvement

Early Support and Key Working training documents highlight the fundamental value of families' participation – parent carers and, where relevant, young people – in the ES&KW training, as training participants or as trainers and co-trainers. Trainers who had the experience of having families participating underline its exceptional value. Early Support therefore recommends that “the widest and most representative range of parent carers as possible is involved in this

¹⁰ Accessing the website for updates and additional information; Information resources on specific conditions and disabilities, for parent carers and young people; Background information resources for parent carers, children and young people; Our family (which includes a single Education, Health and Care Plan format); My life (which includes a single Education, Health and Care Plan format); Multi-agency Planning and Improvement Tool (MAPIT); Informed choice resource; Developmental Journals; Early Support App; Film materials

¹¹ Originally in bold (Early Support, Introduction for trainers, 2013).

training and that full thought is given to the involvement of parent carers in this training day, either as trainers or as participants” (Early Support, Introduction for trainers, 2013).

Several guidance notes are given to inform this approach, namely to ensure that parent carers and young people have equal access to the training and that all aspects of their participation are warranted from the planning stage to the training venue and timing; from the support during the training - if parent carers are to be speakers – to the support after the event has ended.

4. Training sequence and contents

ES&KW training has experienced alterations from its initial proposal (June 2012) to its final proposal (January 2013) - the initial Modular organization, delivered in 5 half days or 2.5 days, lead to a Section organization, embedded in two training days – Day 1 and Day 2 - with a distance learning element (Figure 5). Most training contents remained from the initial to the final proposal, although they were redistributed and grouped differently.

The final **training structure** includes:

- **Pre-reading** to the first day of training, covering Key areas of policy and legislation, an overview of Early Support and Key Working and an introduction to Early Support resources - supported by questions to check and enhance learning.
- **Day 1**, with common content for day 1 of *Working in Partnership* or day 1 of *Key Working in Practice* training, but setting the context slightly differently depending on whether it is being used for one training or the other (participants will only need to attend day 1 once, even if they want to undertake both *Key Working in Practice* and *Working in Partnership* training.)
- **Interim reading**, covering elements such as communication skills and ensuring that links are made between the two days of training and that participants take the opportunity to reflect on day 1 and plan for day 2.
- **Day 2**, which has two separate and distinct versions, depending on whether participants are undertaking *Key Working* or *Working in Partnership* training.

The final ES&KW training includes a large number of training activities, distributed in each day's five and a half hours of content. Each of the final training contents will be described and then analyzed later in the report.

Initial Modules and their contents – June 2012

Final training organization and Contents – Sep. 2012

Module 1: The ES principles in practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Introductions, expectations, overview and parent and young people's experiences 2: The Early Support principles 3: The aims and process of helping 4: Different views of the world 5. Working in partnership 6. Working together in an integrated way 	<p>Section 1: Introductions, expectations, overview and parent carers and young people's experiences</p> <p>Section 2: The Early Support principles</p> <p>Section 3: The aims and process of helping</p> <p>Section 4: Different views of the world</p> <p>Section 5: Working in partnership</p> <p>Section 6: Working together to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families</p>	<p>Early Support Key Working in Practice <i>and</i> Working in Partnership through Early Support training</p> <p>Trainers' guide day 1</p> <p>The Early Support Principles in Practice</p>
Module 2: The importance of the partnership approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introductions, overview and parent and young people's experiences 2. Working in partnership 3. Working together in an integrated way 4. Improving integrated working locally 		
Module 3: Helper qualities and skills to support a single assessment process, single plans and multi-agency meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introductions, overview and parent and young people's experiences 2. Single assessment process leading to a single EHCP 3. Building relationships that enable an effective single assessment and planning process 4. Undertaking a single assessment process leading to a single plan 5. Multi-agency meetings 	<p>Section 1: Introductions, expectations, and overview</p> <p>Section 2: Early Support and key working</p> <p>Section 3: Key working functions</p> <p>Section 4: Summing up the learning so far</p> <p>Section 5: Key working in times of transition and change</p> <p>Section 6: Multi-agency meetings and what will 'getting it right' look like?</p> <p>Section 7: Management and supervision considerations</p>	<p>Early Support Key Working in Practice training</p> <p>Trainers' guide Day 2</p>
Module 7: Key working Functions in practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introductions, expectations, overview and parent and young people's experiences 2. Early Support and Key Working 3. Key Working Functions 4. Summing Up and Ending the session 		
Module 8: Key Working Functions Birth to Adulthood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introductions, expectations, overview and parent and young people's experiences 2. Transition and Change 3. What would successful key working look like in transition and change 4. Key Working to support the child/young person's and family's life journey 		

Figure 5. Initial Modules and final training organization contents

5. Training delivery

Training delivery involves a cycle of profound and attentive preparation, delivery and reflection involving the two training days.

Since the training delivery approach is **conducted in the spirit of partnership**, trainers need to be doing what they are facilitating or teaching, namely demonstrating respect, empathy, using active listening and observation of non-verbal responses, communicating clearly - exploring key topics and clarifying viewpoints - and highlighting the abilities of training participants enabling them to “develop their own self-efficacy, self-esteem and self-understanding” (Early Support, Introduction for trainers, 2013). Trainers are asked to contain anxieties that might be expressed by participants and to help them make sense of their feelings during the training.

Because the training is also **participant led** it should build on the existing knowledge and strengths of the participants, encouraging open discussion and providing constructive feedback at all training stages.

Training methods should be kindly challenging, engaging participants to look at issues for themselves. Nevertheless, if discriminatory values and behaviours are espoused trainers should unpick them to facilitate the unlearning of prejudice. Methods should be experiential and interactive, relating discussions to the specific aims and tasks of the course.

Training facilitation underlines the importance of trainers’ preparation – reading each part of the trainers’ guide carefully; thinking thoroughly about how to approach things; ensuring large familiarity with all Early Support resources and all relevant background reading and being familiar with the legal and best practice context and requirements that Early Support is underpinned by. Thus, ES&KW trainers are urged to be actively involved in:

Delivering and monitoring pre-course information to training participants

Ensuring all participants receive a pre-course pack at least **two weeks** in advance of the first session of training, preferably including relevant local details and other relevant information in the pack; at least **one week** before **each** day’s training participants should send a copy of the agenda, and a letter confirming locations and dates.

Involving families

As described before (Page 33).

Keeping to time and maintaining momentum

Aiming to achieve the balance between running sessions to time, ensuring that participants get the most out of each exercise and activity.

Participant numbers, organizing physical space and seating arrangements

The number of participants on the course should be around sixteen - not fewer than six or more than twenty; physical space should be comfortable, spacious enough to accommodate all participants, allowing for movement around the room. Trainers should assure that participants are moved into different groups during the day “to ensure variation and the opportunity to network with a range of other people” (Early Support, Introduction for trainers, 2013).

Capturing participants' views and decisions and feedback

Concrete delivery strategies are suggested to keep the participants' motivation and develop their approach to partnership working, as keeping running flipcharts for issues, concerns and queries, in a clear and concise way, remembering that not everybody in the group may be literate in English; writing and taking away feedback notes (including issues, concerns, queries, flipchart notes, the key outcomes from exercises and any other important aspects of the day) and taking photos of flipchart sheets, that can be fed back to participants as soon as possible after each training day - someone from the group or local area to can undertake this action.

Questions participants raise that might not be definitively answered, should be gathered together at the end of the training days and explored among local strategic managers and planners and/or the CEST or Department for Education, to guarantee clarification. These should be fed back to participants after the training.

Participants' views of the training – concerning its value, relevance and utility – should also be captured; participant evaluation forms are available for use and/or adaptation.

Using the participant activity sheets

Participants' activity sheets are contained in trainers' guides and should be used accordantly to the trainers judgment of number of copies needed (size and requests of the group).

Using local materials

Local materials pertinent and appropriate for training should be used.

Advocating for anti-discrimination, equality, diversity and inclusion

Trainers are encouraged to reflect upon their own values, attitudes and behaviours and address any preconceptions, prejudices or bias and encourage training participants to do the same.

Mastering terminology used and avoiding jargon

It is fundamental that trainers' master all terminology used throughout the training – e.g., parent carer, young person, child, practitioner, additional need, requirements – and avoid use of jargon.

As previously stated, these essential aspects of the ES&KW, and the intention they contain, will be the lens to observe and understand the outcomes of the research.

3. Before Early Support and Key Working training

Vision, reality and creative tension

You could hold a vision of a genuine perfection in some domain and, although you might never realize that vision, you might also achieve things that would have never been achieved otherwise. **It's not what the vision is, it's what the vision does.**

The gap between vision and current reality is also a source of energy. If there were no gap, there would be no need for any action to move towards the vision. We call this gap **creative tension**.

Peter Senge, 2006, 2009

“Realizing the vision” or “making the ideal real” is truly challenging. In the first chapters, we looked at the fundamental cornerstones of Early Support and Key Working (ES&KW) training based on its underpinning theoretical model, ethos and principles and the way they are revealed in the guiding documentation.

From this first document analysis, we recognized ES&KW training as an important vehicle to fulfil desired outcomes in ES&KW - namely ensuring “the provision of holistic care and support to meet the individual requirements and aspirations of the child, young person and their family” (Early Support, 2012, p.5) - what we may call the training’s ‘vision’. On the other hand, this vision strongly interacts with current reality, which includes constraints and barriers connected to the training itself, but also to the concrete appliance of trainings’ outcomes.

This gap between vision and reality is described by Peter Senge as ‘creative tension’ (Senge, 2006) - a source of energy that drives us to move towards the vision. In this research we look at the gap between the training vision and current reality in this resourceful way. We believe the Central Early Support team, that welcomed and encouraged this research project, and all research participants, that so willingly and generously contributed to the research, had that same purpose – looking at the connection between training intentions, its concrete delivery and impact in each participants life’s, in this creative, dynamic way.

Research thread

The research proposal, its implementation and completion, followed a thread that connected all its different stages – from the analysis of course documentation (drafts and final documents), to its pilot delivery; from training for trainers (T4T) to ES&KW training delivered by the same trainers present in the T4T that was observed; from the different ES&KW training observations to interviews with its trainers and Focus Groups discussions with training participants; from the reflective practice develop by these training participants to their follow up individual interviews, two to three months after the training; from focusing on training participants’ perspectives about training and its impact, to interviewing families with whom they develop a Key Working approach (Figure 6).

These connections aim to follow, and intentionally relate, different training stages, highlighting the importance of being attentive to their impact on successful training.

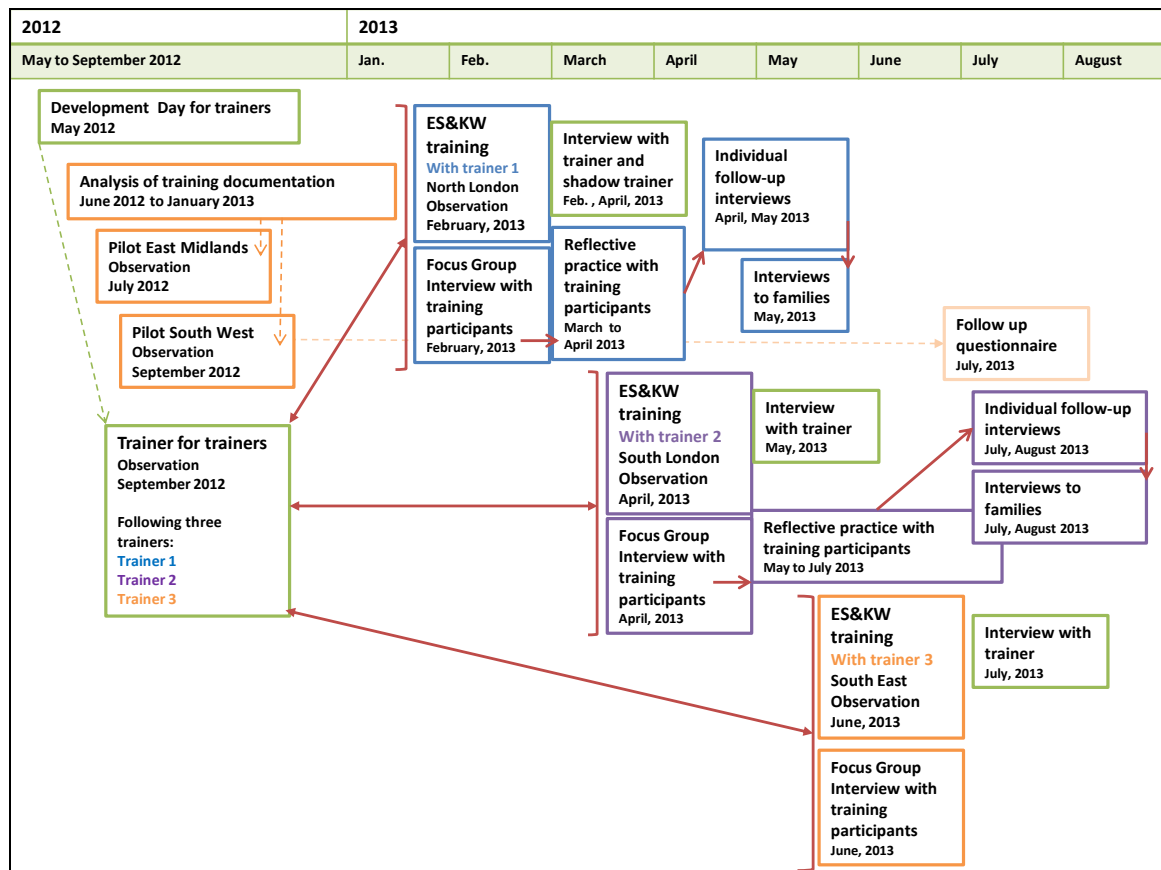


Figure 6. Research thread

Before the definitive ES&KW training started (June 2012 to January 2013)

Before the definitive ES&KW started in January 2013, twenty Pilot trainings and four Training for trainers (T4T) took place. Between the pilot training stage and the definitive ES&KW training, training adjustments to contents and delivery were completed¹².

Beginning our observations – of two pilot trainings and one T4T – we became aware of several issues that from the outset seemed central for the success of the trainings implementation. Since the training developers were also the two trainers observed (East Midlands and South West Pilot trainings), we intentionally choose to share with them our observations, both informally - by face to face dialogues and reflections throughout the training days – and formally, sharing reports that synthesized the observations and emergent inferences from those observed trainings.

Because we had previously learned from the training documentation analysis about the training ethos, principles, theoretical basis, contents and delivery processes, we were able to establish the first relation between the projected training and its delivery - between vision and reality.

¹² The fact that the training changed from the initially planned 2.5 days (June, 2012) to two days in the final ES&KW training delivery (January, 2013), also contributed for these necessary adjustments (see page 34 for details).

ES&KW Pilot training impact - training observations and considerations

Observations and considerations from Pilot training 1 – East Midlands

For a clearer and more immediate comprehension of what are observations and considerations, observations are in black and points for consideration in blue and italics.

1. The group was mainly composed by participants from Education (only one participant worked in the Health sector) and one parent.

The trainer did not prepare the parents' participation in advance as outlined and recommended in "Introduction for trainers".

Since these were Pilot trainings, aiming to experience and reflect the impact of ES&KW training (contents and dynamic/process), whenever possible and as recommended participants should form multi-agency groups, with representatives from Health, Social Services, Education, Voluntary Sector and with parents represented amongst the participants.

Parents' participation could be enhanced with the recommended preparation.

2. The **timings and dynamics previewed for each activity** seemed, at times, too short for its excellent development. At specific moments, this possibly restrained the trainer's capacity to ask participants to contribute more actively to the training. This was, for instance, clear in the 35 minutes attributed to Section 1 – which includes Introductions, Setting a working agreement and Expectations - where time wasn't enough to explore all activities proposed.

On the other hand, there were sections where time established for each activity seemed too long and activities to 'straightforward', not leading to much discussion or reflection (i.e., Activity 3.2: Exploring the process of helping)

There is an ongoing need, namely at this stage (pilots), to review and reflect the aims of the training and of its approach. For it to be participant led and conducted in the spirit of partnership, participants must have the time to express themselves in different ways (individually, in small groups, in the big group) as a concrete opportunity to develop and understand the Early Support way of working.

3. In addition, most participants in this group had little **knowledge and experience about Early Support (ES)**. When asked about it, only four participants said they had *some* experience using its approach. This led the trainer - namely on the trainings' second day - to unfold, with more detail and specificity each content's meaning and context, highlighting its connection to the participants' knowledge, strengths and concrete needs.

The need to consider the adjustment of each proposed activity and of its aims to participants' previous knowledge, strengths and needs, was underlined since the group had little knowledge and experience about Early Support.

4. Although the trainer was experienced, sensitive and skilled – noticeably embodying the trainings' principles in the training delivery - it is difficult, in whole days of training delivery

(5h30m), with diverse activities proposed in a demanding pace and a group of 17 participants, to be sensitive and attentive to all elements it involves.

In these circumstances, *the role of a co-trainer seems to have great value - supporting the lead trainer emotionally and/or practically¹³ is important to promote the trainer's confidence and attentiveness, encouraging the essential reflective process during and after the training.*

A less experienced trainer can also benefit to work with a lead/more experienced trainer to gain experience and knowledge (modelling good practice in training delivery).

5. During the pilot training observations, a critical incident occurred between two participants, one being a practitioner and the other a parent, concerning family and professionals roles in the development of a single plan.

The situation is presented in the following training observation:

Activity 2.1: The benefits and challenges of a single assessment process, leading to a single plan

(...) As the parent explained to the professional the knowledge and feelings involved in developing a single plan, the professional reacted saying 'don't patronize me'.

It was a powerful challenging moment because of the way the professional involved spoke - the words 'don't patronize me' and the tone they were spoken reveal and translate how important attitudes are in all this process, in this way of working... - although we could recognize the 'passion' about the issue discussed in the way the professional confronted the parent, it revealed how difficult it is to engage with others, to share understanding and agreement when perspectives are diverse... (PT1)

As affirmed in the 'Introduction for trainers', the training should be participant led, although there are moments when a trainer must take the lead and help restoring an atmosphere of respect and partnership¹⁴.

The observed critical incident emphasizes the need for trainers to reflect upon challenging questions when they are trained and be prepared for the possibility of having to address them in an immediate and sensitive way during the training delivery.

6. In this pilot training, the trainer's capacity to read the participants' nonverbal signs of enthusiasm and interest vs. disconnection or tension also seemed of great value in adapting the proposed training activities to the group's singular characteristics and needs.

The documentation previously analyzed particularly highlights the importance of the trainer's preparation and knowledge concerning training contents and processes but also focus on the

¹³ i.e., helping discussion (although ensuring not taking over from the lead or divert the discussion), taking notes/summarising the key points of the session, helping to write the key points on flipcharts or noticing if the lead has missed someone trying to contribute the discussion.

¹⁴ "However, there may be times when there will be a need to veer from this where an issue of contestability is raised and a trainer may have need to introduce an alternative equality promoting narrative or information to challenge sensitively what might be a participant -led thread in order to redress any prevailing discriminations." (Early Support, Introduction for trainers, 2013, p.11)

relation to the particular characteristics of the participants and of the local area. An example of this compromise can be observed in the following training observation, where training contents were explored and connected, during the training, with participants' needs.

Activity 3.1: What would successful key working look like in transition and change?

Participants were presented with different scenarios and involved in completing the activity about them. In the meantime, they were also asked to write on post-its their hopes and fears considering key working (to be placed on a flipchart) – 12 hopes (making life easier for families; give families hope; skilled practitioners help families live an ordinary life...) and 16 fears (lack of resources; difficult collaboration among services ...) were written.

As the trainer read the post-its some participants added a little more detail to what they had written. One fear was particularly stressed – the fear of losing their jobs.

After a discussion where the participants' concrete work challenges were addressed, the group decided that these 'hopes and fears' should be sent to the Pathfinder, contributing to their understanding. (PT1)

*At the pilot stage, **trainer's delivery** gradually emerged as fundamental for the training's success. In consequence, T4T is essential, as it can help to understand and reflect upon the necessary balance between the trainings' projected contents, processes/dynamics, and the necessary adjustments to the needs of each local area. In this context, what is 'non-negotiable' in ES&KW training and what can be flexible, is important to be clearly identified and highlighted in T4T.*

Observations and considerations from Pilot training 2 – South West

1. The group was mainly composed of parents (10), one also being a practitioner in the Education area and one a parent-coordinator, working closely with Early Support (training to be an ES&KW trainer). In addition, the group included five other practitioners working in the Education sector and one young person (first two days).

Most participants were familiar with each other which possibly led to the good interaction and reflective work observed during the training.

The trainer did not prepare parents or the young persons' participation in advance.

Although the composition of this group was totally distinct from the first, it also wasn't a multi-agency group, underlining the need to pay special attention to this question.

As in Pilot training 1, the trainer didn't prepare the parents or young person's participation. Particularly with the young person this need was felt since in the trainings second day his participation was very limited, questioning the relevance of his presence. In a situation where a young person comes to participate in a KW training, it should be reflected how he/she will participate before the training (e.g., in a specific day/situation) considering that person characteristics.

2. The contents of this pilot training were (at some specific points) different from the previously observed (Pilot training 1) since meanwhile they were discussed and adapted after a Pilots' trainers meeting.

The trainer regarded the group's singularity (mostly consisting of parent carers) as an opportunity to observe and validate the training's impact (contents and processes), in respect to their singularity and facilitating their participation. Being a Pilot training, training participants suggested that some concrete alterations between the pilot and the final ES&KW training; namely there was a passionate discussion about the word 'ordinary' (as in Early Supports Principles – 'Wherever possible, families, children and young people are able to live 'ordinary lives'') with some parents vividly suggesting its alteration. It was fundamental that the trainer underlined how their views are important, but at the same time affirmed that the word 'ordinary' would surely remain in the ES Principles and training documentation, since it already went through a period of consultation and reflection with parents and practitioners.

In Pilots it is important to be very clear about the extent to which contents and trainings processes can be modified as a result of the Pilot training and the concrete role training participants can or cannot have in these transformations.

3. Considering the training process, and particularly its documentation, in both trainings (Pilot training 1 and 2) some participants asked if a record of their written group work would be kept (e.g., flipcharts). The possibility of taking pictures or keeping the trainings documentation wasn't clear from the trainings starting point.

*As recommended, trainers can underline **at the beginning** of training that participants may record (photograph) or take with them documents they produced in the end of the training event, if trainers don't intend to keep them.*

4. The trainer's capacity to integrate the groups' discussions and reflections from one content to other (previous and to come), relating them in an informal yet intentional way, was particularly observed as the following observation note describes:

Section 5 – Working in partnership

Slide 5.1: Experiences in the early stages of identifying additional need

Sharing experiences of partnership work took place in a much participated way - eight parents shared their experiences focusing on 'Early stages of identifying additional need', and emphasising, as planned, the need for partnership work between practitioners, parent carers and young people. The Trainer frequently asked "what might of helped?" when negative experiences were shared, appealing to the importance of working in partnership in a practical, holistic way. Thus, the "kind of helping relationship (that) would be most useful to parent carers and/or young people" (Activity 5.1) was integrated in the discussion, reflecting on how a partnership approach could have helped to overcome the difficulties shared. The aims of Activity 5.2: Partnership in practice, were also spontaneously included in large group discussions.

The aims of section 5 - To explore the difference between the 'expert' and 'partnership' helping relationship; To explore what we mean by partnership and how we undertake it in practice –

were vividly accomplished through large group discussions, although activities weren't followed as suggested in the training module. (PT2)

This training approach, enabling much participated discussions and reflections, led to the establishment of a progressively more secure training environment, where it was possible for not only parents but also practitioners to share their current work and perspectives about ES&KW:

Before finishing work in the morning, a practitioner shared a draft diagram regarding a 'journey to a single plan through a coordinated assessment' – this document, intended for enhancing coordinated work leading to a single plan in this region, was briefly shared and explained to participants, leading to an initial group reflection about it. (As suggested in 'Improving the way services work together locally' - activity 6.3) (PT2)

The presentation of the document 'Journey to a single plan through a coordinated assessment' by one of the practitioners, highlighted the possible need to support locally each training group after the training – since contents and processes of Key Working, underpinned by the ES principles are challenging and potentially transformative, support seems truly important for its achievement.

The observation of both pilot trainings was fundamental to the research process. Although we observed two very distinct training groups and trainers, the training outcomes were assured by the skilled way trainers addressed the group's needs without losing track of its fundamental aims and structure. On the other hand, since these trainers were the developers of the ES&KW training it was expectable that their delivery was particularly consistent with the training ethos, principles and outcomes preview.

The synthesis presented in Table 3, nevertheless, reveals the challenges observed in these two pilot trainings, concerning the essential aspects of ES&KW training previously presented. Considerations emerging from these observations will be compared to those arising in future stages in the research.

Table 3.

Considerations supported by ES&KW Pilot training observations

Essential aspects of ES&KW training	Considerations supported by ES&KW Pilot training observations
<p>Trainer’s recruitment, preparation and training</p>	<p><i>The critical incident(s) observed emphasize the need for trainers to reflect upon challenging questions when they are trained and be prepared for the possibility of having to address them in an immediate yet sensitive way during the training delivery.</i></p> <p><i>At this pilot stage, trainers’ delivery seems fundamental for the trainings success. In consequence, T4T is essential, as it can help understand the necessary balance between the trainings projected contents, processes/dynamics, and the necessary adjustments to their needs/ each local area. In this context, what is ‘non negotiable’ in ES&KW training and what can be flexible, seems important to be clearly identified and highlighted in T4T.</i></p>
<p>Participant’s recruitment and involvement</p> <p>Family’s involvement</p>	<p><i>Since these were Pilot trainings, aiming to experience and reflect the impact of ES&KW training (contents and dynamics/process), whenever possible and as recommended, participants should form multi-agency groups - with representatives from Health, Social Services, Education, Voluntary Sector and with parents represented amongst the participants.</i></p> <p><i>Parents’ participation can be enhanced with the recommended preparation.</i></p> <p><i>In a situation where a young person comes to participate in a KW training, it should be reflected how he/she will participate before the training (e.g., in a specific day/situation) considering that person characteristics.</i></p> <p><i>Pilot observations underlined the importance of always considering the adjustment of each proposed activity and of its aims to participants’ previous knowledge, strengths and needs.</i></p>
<p>Training sequence and contents</p>	<p><i>There is an ongoing need, namely at this stage (pilots), to review and reflect the aims of the training and of its approach. For it to be participant led and conducted in the spirit of partnership, participants must have the time to express themselves in different ways (individually, in small groups, in the big group) thus giving them a concrete opportunity to develop and understand the Early Support way of working.</i></p> <p><i>In Pilots it is important to be clear about the extent to which contents and trainings processes can be modified as a result of the Pilot training and the concrete role training participants can (or cannot) have in these transformations.</i></p>
<p>Training delivery</p>	<p><i>The role of a co-trainer seems to have great value - supporting the lead trainer emotionally and/or practically is important to promote the trainer’s confidence and attentiveness, encouraging the essential reflective process during and after the training.</i></p> <p><i>A less experienced trainer can also benefit to work with a lead/more experienced trainer to gain experience and knowledge (modelling good practice in training delivery).</i></p>
<p>Other observed elements</p>	<p><i>The presentation of the document ‘Journey to a single plan through a coordinated assessment’ by one of the practitioners, highlighted the possible need to support locally each training group after the training – since contents and processes of Key Working, underpinned by the ES principles are challenging and potentially transformative, support seems truly important for its achievement.</i></p>

ES&KW Training for trainers' impact - training observations and considerations

As described before, during the pilot phase of the training (July to September 2012) it became clear to the Central Early Support team (CEST) - from observations of the training and from feedback from trainers themselves - that it would be useful to extend the assessment and development process to the Training for trainers (T4T). This is in accordance to what was also recognized from the two pilot trainings observed – looking at Table 3 it is clear that **Trainer's recruitment, preparation and training** is one of the areas that needs more attention, from the very beginning, considering the trainings aims and desired outcomes.

To give trainers the chance to prepare before T4T, the CEST asked them to train for delivery of specific sections of the trainers guide, thus giving them opportunity to think through the training in some detail before coming to the T4T.

We will now do a concise presentation of the T4T observations and emergent considerations, which are particularly related to previous observations and considerations of Pilot trainings observed.

1. "As trainers we have to be a lot of things, for a lot of people..." (Trainer, T4T)

"This ES&KW is new to a lot of people – each activity takes it one step forward..." (Co-trainer, T4T)

The T4T group was composed of eleven training participants, a trainer (one of the training's authors and training coordinator we previously met in Pilot trainings) and a co-trainer (an experienced trainer, yet new and recently recruited to Early Support training).

The group included former Early Support (ES) trainers that worked with ES for some years; recently recruited trainers that never delivered ES training, some of which were experienced trainers; and parent carers, in both situations.

This diversity of training experience, skills and competences of the participants was truly demanding for trainers - since participants were asked to work in groups and introduce specific parts of the ES&KW training, an equilibrium between their experience, competences and skills was needed to create balanced groups, with fair opportunities for all to share their knowledge and skills in a safe yet challenging way.

Following this sensitive approach a transformed attitude towards the training and its delivery was observed throughout the two training days.

As the co-trainer underlined, it became evident that this ES&KW training was *new* to participants in different ways – to experienced trainers, since there were new challenges involved, like the age approach (0 to 25 years instead of 0 to 6 years), or the view of Key Working defined by a set of functions; to new trainers, giving them the opportunity to experience the delivery of training contents in a safe environment. As an experienced trainer said on the trainings second day,

We get easily stuck in our way of delivering training... I learn so much yesterday...I went away again inspired! (Training Participant, T4T)

We also observed that *some* of the experienced participants started the first day of training acting as 'experts', in a distinct attitude to other participants in the same situation. This

susceptible question, divergent from the trainings ethos and principles, was carefully addressed by the T4T trainers that – through a continuous reflective process – helped these participants to become more collaborative and reflective. Namely this was accomplished by exploring the training contents, which naturally appeal to this approach, but also by carefully organizing the groups' composition in which these participants were included and the activities chosen for their training delivering.

Since Pilot trainings showed that training delivery is important to successfully achieve the outcomes of ES&KW training, the organization of T4T demands the presence of experienced trainers, very well prepared for delivering ES&KW in all its key dimensions, and capable of considering trainers performances against the Lead Early Support Trainer Person Specification and Essential Criteria (see chapter 2, page 29).

2. “Things that annoy you about training? (Trainer, T4T)

Lack of preparation and disorganization...” (Training participants, T4T)

The training was **structured, timed and delivered** to fulfill the intended T4T outcomes:

- Familiarize participants with the materials and approach
- Provide the opportunity to practice delivery and ask questions
- Support participants to feel better placed to deliver the training

In a similar way to the Pilot ES&KW trainings observed, it was an intense training with a large number of proposed activities, involving pre-reading and preparation. This previous reading was apparently done in different ways by participants – some evidenced an in depth knowledge of the suggested reading contents while others seem uninformed about them.

Although training participants said ‘lack of preparation’ was one of the things that annoyed them about training, some didn’t prepare for the T4T.

Previous readings are essential to prepare training delivery. It should be stressed that this is a condition for trainers to participate in T4T.

3. “Always think – what do people know about this? Even in the universal we are all so unique...” (Trainer, T4T)

This way of delivering T4T – persistently reinforcing to future ES&KW trainers the need to carefully understand and listen to the training groups’ concrete thoughts, needs and strengths – was fundamental for the trainers training.

As one of the training participants - that later became a participant in the present research as trainer - shared in her interview, nearly one year later:

I was very mindful of what we learnt on training [T4T] about that interaction [with training participants] and that picking up and knowing who’s in the room... and that’s quite a lot to do...!
(Trainer 3, July 2013)

*T4T underlines a process of self-reflection and consciousness of each potential trainer pointing towards a mentoring process, both for experienced and new trainers, along the ES&KW training process. **Shadowing trainers** that recognizably embody the ES&KW principles and **co-training** with them, is recommended to enhance these fundamental competences.*

4. “Have the thread continually reinforced... tie every activity to the training ethos, make sure the principles are there from the beginning.” (Trainer, T4T)

The thread that conducted the trainings ethos was visible in the T4T delivery – the connection between training contents was recurrently reinforced, namely highlighting the importance of having the ES principles underpinning the training journey and the helping process as the procedure to ensure their good application:

Helping process is the recipe; Principles are the ingredients! (Trainer, T4T)

Although sometimes it appeared as if “we were looking at the training in fast forward!” (Observation notes, T4T), due to the imposed rhythm of the delivery process and activities proposed, this connection was visibly present.

Since all delivery proposals need to be clearly structured around the ES ethos and principles, the number and rhythm of the activities proposed in T4T should be carefully planned, in order to allow these connections to become clear to all participants.

Table 4.

Synthesis of considerations about the T4T

Since Pilot trainings showed that training delivery is decisive to successfully achieve the outcomes of ES&KW training, the organization of T4T demands experienced trainers, very well prepared for delivering ES&KW in all its key dimensions, and capable considering participants performances against the Lead Early Support Trainer Person Specification and Essential Criteria (see chapter 2, page 29).

Previous readings are essential to prepare training delivery. It should be stressed that this is a condition for trainers to participate in T4T.

T4T underlines a process of self-reflection and consciousness of each potential trainer pointing towards the need of a mentoring process, both for experienced and new trainers, along the ES&KW training process. Shadowing trainers that recognizably embody the ES&KW principles and co-training with them, is recommended to enhance these fundamental competences.

Since all delivery proposals need to be clearly structured around the ES ethos and principles, the number and rhythm of activities proposed in T4T should be carefully planned, in order to allow these connections to become clear to all participants.

These first observations and considerations were fundamental for understanding what the ES&KW training involves and, together with the ‘vision’ presented in its documentation, are a frame to analyze the results of the research next steps.

4. The Early Support and Key Working *first training impact*

Essential aspects of the ES&KW training in trainings observed

1. Trainer's recruitment, preparation and training

In your training room you are modeling the ethos you are trying to deliver
It's fascinating really... its fascinating.

Shadow Trainer1

After the Pilot ES&KW trainings and the Training for Trainers (T4T) observations, the thread that weaves the research became very much visible, namely when we followed trainers - present in that T4T - in their ES&KW training delivery¹⁵.

Trainers observed had different knowledge and experience of Early Support and Early Support training (from deep to recent knowledge and experience) as well as distinct experience as trainers, but shared the vision of ES&KW training as a means for supporting practitioners and parents to work together, in family centered, positive, concrete and transformational way.

Trainer 1 underlines the importance of linking training and practitioner roles for training delivery:

I hope that in my training - and because I'm still a practitioner, even though a manager - I can give that kind of "how does it really work?". You can go to training and actually feel like you've come out and there isn't anything you can put into practice; you know you might agree with it, you might think it's fantastic, but actually *how are you actually putting it into practice?* The reason why I wanted to be involved in [this] training is because I actually believe, I believe in it and I actually believe it's important *for* practice. (II, T1)

Trainer 2 emphasizes the different kinds of transformational processes training can lead to:

There's two ends of a continuum: there's people who it's going to be transformational for... it's transforming something in the way they think about, or see, or conceptualize being parents or young people with additional needs or key working, and through that transformation lots of things will spark off from - [you can see them] transforming in front of you! And then the other end of the continuum, people who made that transformation already but are looking for real practical and strategic steps to make that transformation that they already feel in their hearts... Hopefully they go on with the conversation, excited about it, and that's what training is about I suppose, that's why it's a pleasure to do this because you get people... it might not be people that are inexperienced, sometimes it's a very experienced manager, who's so in the silo, so locked into the procedures that tell him to work in certain way, suddenly refreshing himself - "actually, I'm not here for this, I'm here for something wider..." (II, T2)

¹⁵ All eleven trainers present at the observed T4T were invited to participate, and five accepted the invitation. From those five, three became research participants, namely because their training delivery wasn't coincident in time, allowing for the two days observations to be completed.

Finally, Trainer 3 highlights the potential effects on training participants of being a parent trainer:

I think that parent perspective is really important and it's good to share. You pick a lot of knowledge along the way (...) I'm always researching, to do with disability, to do with my own children... Certainly I have been very aware delivering the training [here] that I would have the opportunity to be able to share what's been happening, which would be of interest to them [training participants]. I like the fact that people are very involved. (II, T3)

This motivation was consistently observed during the ES&KW training deliveries, underlining the importance of the rigorous and sensitive way involved in recruiting and preparing trainers for ES&KW training.

In ES&KW training 1, a shadow trainer was present - after doing T4T, the trainer asked to do so, in order to reinforce her capacity for delivering it in the future. She described it as a fundamental experience:

Because Early Support is new to me I need to see what it looks like in action. Seeing this come alive with someone who knows her stuff inside out... that gives me such confidence to go and do it! (II, ST1)

This learning experience seemed essential in terms of the training delivery and the dynamics observed:

Now that I've seen how this comes together... it's scary! It's just been fabulous to see how these issues come up, and today there were quite a few challenging issues that came along in terms of people's work constraints; I made a note to myself - "You really need to think about how (??) you're going to deal with the challenges", because there will be, in this climate, a lot... (II, ST1)

One of the trainers observed (T3) delivered ES&KW training for the first time, and also did a shadow training experience after T4T and before delivering it. Even so, she describes this first experience as lead trainer as challenging and demanding,

It was challenging for me, as you know, because I never delivered a whole day by myself. I was really nervous about it...

[It was] really demanding, and also... it's frightening when you're responding to things; and I was very mindful of what we learnt on training [T4T] about that interaction and that picking up and knowing who's in the room and all of that... and that's quite a lot to do...

I really came away through that day 1 appreciating what a huge thing it was... I just felt like I wasn't in control that first day; it did make me do more preparation on the second. (II, T3)

Listening to and observing this trainer (T3), and the shadow trainer before her, it seems that on the first training deliveries it would be particularly important to do it as co-trainer or to have an experienced co-trainer partnering the training delivery, in order to help building confidence in the delivering process.

Although the presence of co-trainers was initially suggested, this didn't happen, except in T4T. From what we observed, the reasons initially invoked for this approach (Early Support, Introduction for Trainers, 2013) remain truly important and valid; however, if it isn't possible to always have this option, at least in these initial stages of training delivery the presence and

involvement of an experienced trainer as co-trainer, or offering new trainers the opportunity to co-train before delivering ES&KW training as leading trainers, is strongly recommended.

As it was underlined by the ES&KW trainer, co-training also gives a concrete chance to show the Early Support Principles in action:

It was certainly useful having a Shadow Trainer with us in that course; although it's manageable as a single trainer, that's actually the message that we give throughout Early Support – it's about working together... It gives you the chance to demonstrate working together in partnership models of working, which is very useful when you're talking around that in terms of what you're delivering. I actually think it's quite good to be modeling that as well. It is about having those different views coming in and being able to kind of play with those. (II,T1)

2. Participant's recruitment and involvement

Participants' recruitment was described by trainers and training participants as challenging and sometimes difficult, particularly in what relates to having, as intentionally planned, a multi-agency group of participants. Occasionally, ES&KW trainings were cancelled because there weren't sufficient practitioners registered.

Suddenly, by accident, I found out that there was key working [training] here, which would've been ideal (...) and then in the end it was cancelled, and it was such a shame... (FG2, TP2b)

This was often explained and connected to the difficulty in reaching different services and cascading information.

I found about all of this by complete accident, there wasn't a coordinated approach to existing coordinators to say "this is the training, this is what's happening..." (...) I should know about it! And somebody else was telling me about it! (FG2, TP2a)

We've been crying out for an Early Support training for years and never had it, we've been on training list, we've been in touch with the coordinators and never had anything come through... so we were really quite annoyed by the fact that we didn't know it was happening and it is such a shame that it wasn't more widely advertised and better attended, because from eight of us, five from one organization and three from another, you've got two organizations represented here and it's just diet to be honest... (FG3, TP3a)

The role of Trainers and Regional facilitators¹⁶ in recruiting participants wasn't clearly defined leading to different situations, from none to some communication between them; nevertheless, this communication, when verified, occurred during or after the training, and not before, in participants' recruitment.

I think the model is great, that you have the regional facilitator, you have the trainers, you have them Central Early Support team next door, so I think you've got all the pieces on the chess board, but perhaps mechanism [is missing] for making sure that it happens systematically rather than from good will and enthusiasm. (...) It probably could be improved in terms of structuring it more. I did email the Regional Facilitator [about the training] but she is someone who I know anyway, I've known her for a number of years, whereas the previous Regional

¹⁶ Regional facilitators work with local, regional and national Early Support and key working training providers to assist and enable them to promote, deliver and evaluate Early Support and key working training (Early Support, 2013)

Facilitator, who I knew only as a name, I had never met... it's easier when it's someone you know. (II, T2)

I'm in touch with the Regional Facilitator and we've worked together; I've been to a Regional meeting and that was fine, but I wasn't aware that the training had no parents on it. And if I had knew (...) I know people here I could of have persuaded in possibly to come. I think that a two way thing is quite important - we only got the names of who was going [training participants] the week before, so I think by then it's really almost too late to try to pull up other people. (T3)

I haven't fed back to the Regional Facilitator at all and I don't actually know what happens afterwards, to be very honest with you, in terms of pick up where people come back with any questions. (T1)

Because of the importance of having multi-agency training participants groups – underlined in the trainings aims as fundamental – it is important to review how to ensure that the process of conducting participants' recruitment, involving the Regional Facilitators and Trainers, is implemented as intended.

The trainings duration, designation and the content of the publicity itself was also pointed as possibly discouraging for participants recruitment.

Considering the trainings' duration one training participant commented the difficulty of practitioners attending two full days training:

It's quite unrealistic to expect people to attend two full days of training, which is how the model is written – a two full day training course. I don't believe that that will work... people just don't have the capacity to do it. The reason why I'm saying that is because when we knew that the ES&KW training was happening here, we publicized that with absolutely everybody – health, social care, education, all the people that already are involved with Early Support and all of those people that have been touched by Early Support through our work (...). The majority of people came back to me saying – "I'm sorry – I cannot take two days out of my work to go to this training". (II, TP2a)

One trainer also stressed the need to adjust trainings' duration to parents' needs:

It's an issue for families the length of the [training] day, because most families who have a child with SEN can only attend something between 10am and 2pm. And I understand there are restrictions on what we can do (...) but actually, that's what you need to do if you want to engage with parents. (II, T3)

Several training participants underlined that the trainings designation could be misleading:

Title is not clear at all... it's quite misleading... (FG1, TP1c_Parent)

And if you work in a different area... for each of us it will mean different things! If you say Key Working to an early year's person, they would think it's working with every single child on everyday basis... (FG1, TP1a)

The need to tailor the information about the ES&KW training, making it more accessible to parents, was also highlighted:

In my area, because I've got the local contacts, I've also sent [information about the ES&KW training] round to some of the Local Authorities webs. But again, even that first communication that came out about the ES&KW, that I was asked to forward on, it wasn't appropriate for

parents, is was to jargonistic and it didn't even make it explicit that it was for them. So I had to tailor that, to put it out. (II, T3)

To make ES&KW training more accessible to multi-agency participants and parents, it is important that in future training editions its duration and explanation of the contents are part of a participated discussion and reflection including trainers, training participants and parents' needs and perspectives.

3. Family's involvement

Families' involvement characterizes Early Support since a fundamental element is the aim to closely work *with* families. Thus, Early Support recommends that families are deeply involved in ES&KW training, either as trainers or as participants.

This was clearly observed in all stages of the research, from Pilot trainings, to T4T and ES&KW trainings - from the 86 research participants, 27 were parent carers or family members to children and young children with SEND. Their participation and presence was of great value, as observed during trainings and expressed in diverse interviews and focus group discussions.

A young person's participation and the large number of parents involved in one of the observed Pilot trainings was highlighted by a Pilot training participant as her most valuable learning experience:

On our training we had a large number of parents and a young person with Down's syndrome. My most valuable learning experience was from working together with the parents and the young person. It helped me to "place" the training into real lives and the day to day experiences of families. It helped me to understand the difference between working with a young person or a family and intervening in their lives without listening or understanding exactly what the family want or need.

This experience helped me to think deeply about how the Early Support principles and helping process work in the everyday lived experience of families and young people. I feel that I had a unique experience on this course as the number of parents far outweighed the number of professionals giving a different view point to the training. (PTP1b)

Another training participant also underlined the value of having a parent in the training and in the Focus group.

It's nice meeting the parents outside of work, so I can ask you questions I can't ask my families, because their just at the start of the situation... [particularly talking to the parent present in the Focus Group] you know about so much more than what I would know, because I'm the professional and you're a parent... you know, you've lived through this at present time. So I think you've got a wealth of information we can use and help other families. (FG1, TP1b)

Training participants also valued the experience of having a trainer that also is a parent:

It was so good, I liked the fact that she obviously has personal experience, she's been through it, she obviously has a great deal respect for Portage, which is lovely to hear! She was able to change some of the activities [sharing her own family experience], and actually it was quite good (...) I think people don't quite understand how many services a child or a family can actually have... it suffocates... suffocates... (FG3, TP3b)

When Parent carers weren't present, trainers and training participants underlined how important their presence would have been in the trainings context,

When I was reading, before I came, I thought it'd be good to have a parent there, I thought would be really nice. It's a pity that there wasn't... [it's very important] for us to get a perspective on that parent's point of view, "this is what we're living on a daily basis in our home, not when we pop for a few hours, twice a week, but this is what I'm dealing with day in day". (FG2, TP2c)

Parents (...) are the people that actually convert the practitioners into becoming key workers, because they hear their story and they say "I can't let that carry on, that kind of practice..." (FG2, TP2b)

As an alternative to parents' presence – or combined with it – the impact of videos with parents, children and young people with SEND sharing their story, were also described and observed as a good way of bringing their voices into the training.

There was a statement from a parent [in the video], which was a very powerful, and helps us to reflect about the work we are doing... (FG2, TP2c)

In the training, when I brought in the videos, the second day, I just thought it just felt like it needed something else... to bring in. (II, T3)

A respectful silence and deep attention was observable during the videos presentation of a father sharing his story; the group's expressions were visibly transformed while watching it. Reflections after the videos also translated the impact it had on training participants:

What the father said... Key Working is so important! (TP2a)

Twenty six people working with the child... there must be a better way! (TP2b)

The complexity comes through in a few minutes time... (T2)

(ES&KWT2, Observation notes)

On the other hand, the necessary preparation to optimise parents' participation - before, during and after the training – was also emphasised and recognized as an important requirement for its success, respecting the important principle of "not harming" parents involved.

The video clips that we were shown with parents talking... that's always useful, sets the scene. If you have a real parent there that's even better! But you have to be careful how you manage that... it's harder to do, especially if you don't really know your audience...

When we deliver Key Working and Working in Partnership ourselves, we will probably use our parents - they are very comfortable, and they've done it many times. (...) all our parents now are being trained to deliver, they're all very good and they're very good at the group dynamics (FG2, TP2b)

One trainer more emphatically focused the importance of this preparation, and suggested that this needed rethinking in the organization of training.

Parent voices are incredibly powerful, but I'm uncomfortable doing it without a really rigorous structure and process behind it... and I feel, as it stands, we don't have that. I don't think it's easy or appropriate; it's disrespectful for parents to just try and bring one in because I have a two day course... [we need] enough time to prepare, support and manage that before hand,

during and after [the training]. When we have this [discussion] in T4T I was quite alone in my view... I think if it's got value its worth doing properly and fully through. (II, T2)

Considering the value of parents' participation, but also acknowledging that full thought should be given to the involvement of parent carers in training, either as trainers or as participants, concrete ways of helping to ensure this preparation seem fundamental.

Parents trained to be parent trainers are described as confident to share their experiences. Whenever possible, these parents, besides being lead trainers, could also be co-trainers in ES&KW trainings, giving special meaning to the training's aims of promoting partnership and a family centered approach.

Preparation to receive parents as participants is also crucial; it is important that trainers and Regional Facilitators are closely involved in participants' recruitment and that special attention is given to the supporting parents as participants.

4. Training sequence and contents

We started analysing the ES&KW trainings sequence and contents early in the research (June 2012) tracking the changes that occurred between the training's initial proposal, the Pilots (July to September 2012) and the final ES&KW training guides (September 2012 to January 2013).

Since the training's sequence and contents aim to embed the Early Support ethos and principles - aspiring that these be present in each theme, activity and dynamic proposed - we regarded them as the Early Support vision, and therefore the lens to observe the diverse training deliveries. Further on, the focus groups' discussions, interviews, questionnaires and reflective practice, gave us an in depth view of how the training's sequence and contents were understood and interpreted by trainers and training participants.

In this process, it's important to acknowledge that the context of each training was singular, delivered in a particular space and time, involving the relationship between the trainer, a group of participants - and, in this case, a researcher - all bringing into the interaction individual experiences, knowledge, motivations and expectations. It also involves their proximal and distal relations with others and the contemporary socio-political context that embeds their professional and personal lives. These individual, relational and social circumstances underpin perspectives, beliefs and values, present in the training's immense richness and, simultaneously, in its complexity.

Since we will now analyse in more detail the ES&KW training sequence and contents it is useful to provide a reminder of them:

Day 1: The Early Support Principles in Practice¹⁷

Common to ES&KW training and Working in Partnership through Early Support training

Section 1: Introductions, expectations, overview and parent carers and young people's experiences

Section 2: The Early Support principles

Section 3: The aims and process of helping

Section 4: Different views of the world

Section 5: Working in partnership

Section 6: Working together to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families

Day 2: Early Support Key Working in Practice training

Section 1: Introductions, expectations, and overview

Section 2: Early Support and key working

Section 3: Key working functions

Section 4: Summing up the learning so far

Section 5: Key working in times of transition and change

Section 6: Multi-agency meetings and what will 'getting it right' look like?

Section 7: Management and supervision considerations

Figure 7. ES&KW training contents and sequence

ES&KW training sequence and contents - from broad to detailed perspectives

Several aspects referred to by training participants about ES&KW training contents and their sequence were correspondingly underlined by trainers. Nevertheless, we intentionally choose to separate their views, since we recognize that both bring specific knowledge and experiences to this discussion and analysis.

Trainers' perceptions are based on their experience in training delivery and particular knowledge about the ES&KW training - they are experienced trainers that went through specific training and preparation (T4T), which gives them a privileged insight about the training ethos, principles, the training sequence and contents.

Participants, on the other hand, had their first contact with the present ES&KW approach throughout the training itself and bring into the discussion their particular views of how the training's contents and sequence corresponded to their expectations and needs. The methodology underlining the research allowed them to share their views about the training in different stages, in a progressively more deep, reflective way – they shared their views immediately after the training (Focus group discussions), then were asked to reflect upon the training contents throughout a period of two months that followed the training delivery (Reflective Practice), and finally shared their views three to four months after the ES&KW training (Individual interviews). Participants from one of the Pilot trainings observed also shared their views about the training's contents and sequence through a questionnaire, ten months after its delivery.

¹⁷ Day 1 contents are the same for Early Support Key Working in Practice training and Working in Partnership through Early Support training, in what concerns their focus, coverage and activities, with some small differences in terms of overview and setting the context; as referred in the Introduction for Trainers, "Participants who have undertaken day 1 of Working in Partnership will not need to undertake day 1 of Key Working in Practice, and vice versa" (Early Support, Introduction for trainers, 2013).

We will start by presenting the training participants' views about the ES&KW training sequence and contents followed by the trainers' perspectives about it. We will then share points for consideration with reference to both views.

Training participants' views

When asked about the training's sequence and contents, several training participants described the ES&KW training as well structured and meaningful, underlining the effectiveness of its delivery model,

It was nicely structured, everything was very clear, step by step, so if you didn't have an understanding of this it would be very clear and straightforward. (FG3, TP3b)

The training's structure worked very well and the delivery model of mixing activities with information, discussion and power point was effective. (PTP1b)

Other participants highlighted that there seemed to be a lot of activities proposed in a short period of time. They also recognized the challenge of "fitting" contents into a two days training that is aimed at a great diversity of participants', with diverse knowledge and experience about Early Support and Key Working:

I thought there was too much to take in over the time scale (PTP1c)

The structure does feel a bit squashed, because that's where you really get to explore what it's like with the empowering balances. (FG2, TP2b)

In all training the timing is really hard, and I understand that when you have to fit it in a two day programme, [it's difficult to choose] what takes priority... because people are at different starting points. (FG2, TP2a)

One training participant suggested a three day course to 'tie' the knowledge gained – "I feel like a three day course, would be good... Just maybe one more day following on from today to tie everything more together." (FG2, TP2c)

Regarding the coherence between the two training days, participants proposed that contents related to Key Working (Day 2) should be placed in Day 1:

It would've been useful to swap some of them [contents] - the information from Day 2 would have more benefit if it was in Day 1. This Key Working function, we need to understand it, *before* we know about aims and processes of helping... Because then you would think "Oh yeah makes sense, it was what we were talking about the previous day" (TP1a)

Training contents that were less addressed throughout the training delivery - namely supervision and multi-agency meetings¹⁸ - were also referenced, suggesting these should be discussed more fully, in view of their importance to Key Working.

Things like what happens when you end up supervising people that you're not line managing (...) is something that really does need a lot of exploring. (FG2, TP2b)

We ran out of time and to me that's one [multi-agency meetings] of the pivotal parts of the training (...) and that's what I would do – I'd change it, because I think that's a really important aspect of it [ES&KW training]. (FG2, TP2a)

¹⁸ Day 2 - Section 6: Multi-agency meetings and what will 'getting it right' look like?
Section 7: Management and supervision considerations

Considering Key Working¹⁹ specific contents, participants suggested that more examples would help understanding their translation into practice,

[Key work and Key working distinction] I think some examples might helped – to say a Speech and Language Therapist might do this function of Key Working and the other person would do that function... (FG1, TP1c)

To look at how that [key working] looks in different scenarios, because we looked at pretty much one scenario (...) I think people need to get an idea of how that looks, because there are quite complex different sets of needs that come in. (FG2, TP2a)

One of the training participants stressed that materials were “very wordy and pitched at a very high level of written English” (RP, TP2a), leaning more to professionals, which might exclude people from accessing the training, namely parents.

Although I understand and embrace the notion that this training should be delivered to a multi-agency group, I am struggling to see how this will fit together with parents without some differentiation of materials. (RP, TP2a)

The fact these materials are mostly accessible electronically, was also regarded as potentially excluding those who can't access them this way.

Training participants furthermore reflected about the constitution of the training group of participants and their range of experiences and knowledge in ES&KW - from none to substantial - an aspect related to the participants' recruitment previously observed:

Ensuring that there is a mixture of people who have experience of key working and those without experience would be helpful. (RP, TP2b)

I think other practitioners should've been invited, especially social workers, because we need the whole team... I mean we are in partnership with so many different groups... (TP1b)

This was regarded as having an actual impact on the depth to which the contents were approached and discussed:

Because it was trying to give so much more of an overview, you were almost exploring it from the very beginning, and so you weren't able to sort of dig deep into some of these concepts (...). We kind of looked, and then we jumped out again, and that was necessary because you have to go to the level that is... with the least knowledge if you like, and go from there. (FG2, TP2a)

Training participants globally regarded the ES&KW training contents and sequence as well structured and meaningful. Nevertheless several particular aspects were discussed – trainings sequence, the number of its contents, the depth in which these were considered, the clarity of the training materials – with concrete suggestions to their adjustment to participants' expectations and needs.

Trainers' views

When asked about the ES&KW trainings contents and sequence, trainers also expressed that Day 1 was particularly intense taking into consideration its many contents, and expressed their concern about the way they delivered the training:

¹⁹ Day 2 - Section 2: Early Support and key working
Section 3: Key working functions

I think that Day 1 is really heavy, there's a lot to get through, and certainly for me on the course that you observed, perhaps I haven't quite thought through... because there's an awful lot to get through. I think it is about choosing what you need to actually make sure that you are covering the other parts that you can miss out. (T1)

All through ES&KW training observations, we witnessed the trainers' effort to be faithful to the training's sequence – which was always maintained – but also to adjust the training's contents to the groups' characteristics and to their own approach to training, as recommended in "Introduction for trainers":

You never get lost; you may deviate, you may adjust, but you know you are being true to what the [Central Early Support] team wants... you're not going to a maverick job but you can adjust within that set of priorities; I think that's really, really important... (T2)

Trainers also shared their views about particular aspects of the training's contents and sequence that might be transformed, with the aim of improving its projected outcomes. One of the most underlined views was the fact that Key Working contents were only addressed in Day 2:

I think we've raised that rightly, their expectations - a Key Working course. Actually they don't speak much about Key Working in the first day... (T2)

In fact, in all trainings observed, participants' expectations were predominantly and naturally – considering the training's title and aims - related to understanding better what Key Working was and how it might impact their individual and team work with children and young people with SEND and their families²⁰.

Different suggestions were then presented - one proposal was to make this clear(er) to training participants when ES&KW training is presented, at the time of its dissemination:

(...) when people see the training advertised, I think maybe they're expecting it to be something different, so it's just the case that you need to make that clear... people are expecting it's going to tell them what a Key Worker is going to do. (T3)

Moreover, although understanding the intention of having first common training day for ES&KW and Working in Partnership, other trainers suggested that there might be different options in the training's *sequence* eventually benefiting training participants' knowledge of the ES&KW approach:

I understand why we kind of play it as it is, but everyone comes wanting to think about Key Working (...) So part of me wonders whether there should be something around Key Working on the first day, whether Key Working could come before Working in Partnership (...) because Working in Partnership would work really nicely with the Multi-agency meetings. (T1)

It's also considered, since Key Working contents are only delivered on Day 2 that trainers and training participants don't have the chance of reflecting about them between the two training days:

²⁰ Connected to Key Working, questions about future legislation (Child and Family Bill 2014) - namely the birth-to-25 education, health and care plan (EHCP) - were also frequently part of the participants expectations regarding the ES&KW training.

Just doing it all in Day 2... you don't have any time for reflection, for the group to come back and ask any questions [about Key Working], whereas if you got it in Day 1, I think there is a potential that you could then have some reflection about that, particularly around the practice (...) It'd be interesting to see if that worked. (T1)

One trainer was particularly precise when analysing training sessions, reflecting about their sequence and contents in relation with the training's outcomes. The transformation the course went through from two and a half days to two days was mentioned as one of the aspects that might explain why the course has very good contents that don't seem to clearly connect to each other or to Key Working training specific outcomes. Then, all training contents were analysed, one by one, highlighting this particular aspect:

Particularly the first day of the two days, each session is good, but I don't think it logically hangs together. (...) If I was coming as a participant, to learn about ES&KW, I'd be asking myself - Why are we doing a quarter of a day on the Helping Process²¹? If that was my learning need I would be going to a course about the Helping Process, which is equally as valuable. (...) Different Views²² is excellent also (...) but it feels like we don't weave it in, we have another very good but separate session; I think it's all embedded (...) Different Views of the World *about ordinary lives*, but what we do is we go into this very good photograph, this very good statement, but there's no explicit connection with the Early Support principles... (T2)

Trainers consensually consider Day 2 to be more consistent with the training's aims and outcomes. Nevertheless, there is a strong suggestion to bring some of the specific Key Working contents from Day 2 to Day 1, for all the presented reasons.

There are diverse perspectives to be considered about the ES&KW training sequence and contents following the trainers' and training participants' views about them, from the large number of contents to their sequence and relevance to the trainings outcomes.

*The most convergent and consistent proposal is that **Key Working specific contents should start to be approached in ES&KW training Day 1**. This points towards the need of rethinking the advantages of having a common first day of training for Key Working and Working in Partnership considering the disadvantages identified by trainers and participants.*

In this reflection, the relation between ES&KW training sequence, contents and desired outcomes, where Key Working is central²³, should be clear to all implicated in the training, including: those responsible for constructing and developing the training; trainers who deliver it; and training participants - from the first moment they first learn about the course in its dissemination and chose to register, to the training delivery itself.

²¹ Section 3: The aims and process of helping

²² Section 4 – Different views of the world

²³ **Learning outcomes ES&KW training:**

- Understand **key working** functions
- Understand how the principles of Early Support influence **key working**
- Be able to use relevant skills and knowledge to implement **key working**
- Identify why it is important for practitioners to understand the experiences of disabled children and young people and those with other additional needs and their families
- Explain partnership working with disabled children, young people and those with other additional needs and their families and with other agencies
- Explain how to use reflection to improve their own **key working** practice

5. Training delivery

As we underlined previously, ES&KW training involves a cycle of profound and attentive preparation, delivery and reflection throughout the two training days. Much of what was already emphasized in this chapter has, explicitly and implicitly, connection with this training delivery cycle since it reflects trainers' involvement in ES&KW training in all its process - preparation, delivery and reflection – namely in what concerns:

Trainers' vision about the training's aims and desired outcomes, including their perspectives about co-training (in **Trainer's recruitment, preparation and training**)

Trainers' involvement in ES&KW training's preparation, including their work with the Regional Facilitators (**Participant's recruitment and involvement**)

Trainers' approach to families' involvement and preparation to support it (**Families Involvement**)

Trainers' analysis of the sequence and contents of the research, aiming to achieve the balance between running sessions according to what was recommended and ensuring that participants get the most out of each exercise and activity considering the trainings outcomes (**Training sequence and contents**)

We will now include some particular aspects that weren't yet focused, namely considering the training observations, which were particularly important to recognize and comprehend *how* each trainer materialized the ES&KW training delivery.

Trainers' singular approaches to Early Support and Key Working training

All trainers had a unique way of delivering the ES&KW training – their characteristics as trainers, their experience in training delivery and their knowledge about Early Support, created a personalized approach to training. All ES&KW training recommendations presented in chapter two were present in trainers' deliveries but some were particularly observed:

- Trainer 1 was particularly successful **in keeping to time and maintaining momentum**, achieving a “balance between running sessions to time [and] ensuring that participants get the most out of each exercise and activity”(Early Support, Introduction to trainers, 2013). All sessions were completed, as well as most of the activities suggested in the trainers guide, with strong group participation. This intended balance required permanent reflection throughout training delivery:

I think that's the dilemma with training, isn't it? People learn from each other but equally there has to be a balance of how much you're giving information... (II, T1)

Within this particular training, throughout each session, we observed participants becoming progressively more willing to share their experiences and thoughts with the group. In fact, some group members, besides being professionals, were also family members of children and young people with SEND. From this attitude of trust, a more supportive and collaborative training atmosphere emerged.

Trainer 1 recognizes the group's transformation throughout the two training days, and reflects about the impact of group dynamic, the importance of understanding participants' thoughts and perspectives and about confrontation, as keystones of that transformation:

I think it was an exceptionally good group, in terms of having worked together and produced. I think that Day1, as you would expect, as they didn't know each other (...) certain personalities [were] taking over the day - we had some very strong personalities on that first day that voiced their opinions! That changed on the second day, how they worked together...

I think that managing the group dynamic is something you have to think about always and for me there's always the challenge of *how much do you confront?* [Focusing on] what it is they're saying rather than getting in a confrontation around those issues. (...) I like to test it a little bit before I'm clear about what it actually means. (T1)

This sensitive and attentive way of working, was namely observed in a critical incident when one of the participants, presenting the general aims of helping (Section 3: Aims and Process of Helping, Day 1) said: "We have to educate parents and tell them what to do." (Observation, T1, Day1), conflicting with Early Support principles. Trainer 1 first tried to understand what the participant meant and built their dialogue on the importance of giving information to parents, building a trustful relation, empowering families to decide and giving families' control, gently but determinedly emphasizing the Partnership approach.

- Trainer 2 particularly explored with participants the meaning they attributed to each of the training's contents, **capturing participants' views and decisions and feedback**. Very well organized and prepared "keeping running flipcharts for issues, concerns and queries, in a clear and concise way" (Early Support, Introduction for trainers, 2013), all the training process was registered and shared with participants, and activities were built on their perspectives and thoughts, aiming for their complete understanding of what was being discussed:

I'm always trying to find a way through that complexity and that's often when the transformation happens - because it gets through the complex, you could see something that matters. (T2)

Consequently, some activities are more deeply explored than others, in favour of this approach that underlines a participant led, dynamic process in training:

Of course there are outcomes you want to be there, but actually we constantly negotiate, every half an hour (...) it's a very dynamic process! You know (...) you potentially can cover [Day1 contents] on the second day, if that's what the group needs... knowing the second day well you almost have that visual image of how things will be slotting and its constantly moving (...) in the training, you're constantly renegotiating all the time; it's not a formal process of "this exercise takes this long". (T2)

This was possibly the reason why the Focus Group discussion following this training was particularly suggestive about the training's process, contents, their pertinence and sequence – it was clear for participants the 'what and why' of each of the training components.

- Finally, Trainer 3 was a parent and a trainer and therefore the trainers' own parenting experiences were transversally present in all activities, along with experiences of working with other families in similar situations (**Family Involvement**). When reflecting about being a parent and a trainer, the challenge of integrating both roles in training was shared, emphasizing the intention of giving professionals a parent's view based on a parent journey, in a non-judgmental way, believing all professionals want to do their best to help children and families:

It's tricky isn't it? I don't know if I get it right or not, but I try to. I think what you gain through being involved in parent participation is seeing the other side of the fence, and having that understanding... (...) I think I've been through an emotional journey... not that you ever get through that - you don't suddenly get over what's happened - but you've been through that so you're in a place where you can look in a not judgmental way on how people do their jobs (...) I understand that everyone, everyone that works with children, they're coming because they want to help (...) So I think yes it can be difficult (...) to make sure it's not just about me and my children and what they would need; I think I've just learnt... I hope I've learnt, to adapt it. (T3)

We also observed how this trainer particularly encouraged participants to apply contents to their practice **using local experiences and practices**, consistently bringing them to the training dynamic.

Again T3 appealed to training participants "Which of these processes do you have in place already locally?", establishing an explicit connection between training contents and the group's professional practices. Responding to the participants doubts and reservations - i.e., "Lots of people would agree with the ethos, but putting it together is quite hard..."(TP3a) - the message emphasised was that "It's an unsettling time, but also an opportunity to make things better...". (OT3)

Frequently during training Trainer 3 highlighted the good work the group was doing locally and encouraged participants to influence other professionals to take the Early Support and Key Working approach, namely those working in other areas and with young people:

I think they were already, probably, working at the time in a joined up way. What I hope they took away, because their team works really well, was influencing outwards and spreading the word about the training on other areas and hopefully you do get a chance to deliver there again (...) I think giving them that because they were mainly [working with children with ages from] naught to five...(T3)

Finally, it's important to point out the fact that it was this trainer's first ES&KW training delivery. Specifically on Day1, we frequently observed moments when T3 needed to consult the training guides during training delivery. The motivation to follow the training guides – sessions, activities and trimmings previewed – was clearly present but the groups' dynamic and training approach, was unevenly achieved on the training's first day. This brings us to the importance of having an experienced co-trainer at least on the first training deliveries, to support the trainer's confidence.

Trainings' delivery is a cornerstone of ES&KW training. Closely observing three different trainer's – with diverse training delivery experience and knowledge about Early Support – underlines the importance of Training for Trainers (T4T), to reinforce the trainers' capacity to prepare, deliver and reflect about their delivery. It is particularly important, as previously recommended, that at least in the initial stages of training delivery, an experienced trainer can co-train to support the new ES&KW trainer.

5. After the ES&KW training - Participants' voices

When a practitioner reflects in and on his practice, the possible objects of his reflection are as varied as the kinds of phenomena before him and the systems of knowing-in-practice that he brings to them.

Schön, 1983

Early Support and Key Working training participants were invited to reflect about the training's contents, delivery and impact, throughout a process that involved focused group discussions', immediately after the training; continuous reflective practice, starting one week after the training and progressing into the next two months; and an individual interview, three to four months after the ES&KW training. This sustained process gave participants the possibility of revisiting the training and becoming more aware of its personal and professional impact.

Since we have already examined the training's immediate impact in previous chapters – through the analysis of focus groups' contents - we will now look into the trainings' impact through reflective practice, the first stage of two phases that appealed to a more individualized route into the impact of ES&KW training.

Early Support and Key Working training impact considered through reflective practice

Reflective Practice helped participants revisit the training's contents in a continued way, echoing the training's impact on themselves and on their work with children and young people with SEND, their families and other professionals. This Reflective Practice process aimed at building concrete links between participants' beliefs, goals and practices and ES&KW contents, and also to help them connect their vision – what they would like to accomplish in their work with children and young people with SEND, their families and other professionals – and to consider the present reality – what seems to prevent them from achieving it.

Thus, during the Reflective Practice process, through exercises that would potentially reveal participants' strengths, vulnerabilities and needs we asked them to link the training contents to themselves and to their work²⁴. Their reflections highlighted the impact of ES&KW training in different dimensions: from a personal to a professional dimension; from a team work and management dimension to Key Working with families.

Personal impact

The possibility of integrating Key Working functions into the training participants' professional role became clearer after the ES&KW training:

I think after partaking in this training that, although, I am not a Key worker officially I can still carry out some of the functions in my current role and change the way I work and my approach. (RP_TP2c).

Yet, other participants, namely Key Workers, feared that the impact of the new approach to Key Working, namely of Key Working functions vs. Key Worker role, had negative

²⁴ From more global (Reflective Practice 1 and 3) to more specific requests, giving emphasis to Early Support Principles and Key Working Functions (Reflective Practice 2 and 4), concluding the Reflective Practice exercises with concrete questions about the training's impact (Reflective Practice 5)

consequences for them. They also underlined the possible connection between this transformation and financial restrictions:

I see that the sole role of being a Key Worker is gradually being merged into many aspects of other professionals' and volunteers' roles. As many Council's undertakes cuts each year to various services, the Key Worker Role which is not Statutory becomes vulnerable (...) I work full time [as Key Worker] and have a coordinator that works part time and we both cover the whole borough together, which can be very demanding. The future is very shaky I feel due to these facts. (RP_TP1b)

Following the two training days, other participants expressed the intention of expanding their knowledge about Key Working and related contents, namely considering the application of the new Key Working approach in the context of political changes to provision for disabled children:

I would like to further my knowledge on the Key Working functions such as assessment and planning of integrated support packages. (RP_TP2b)

Work on looking at the application of key working in the context of changes to provision for disabled children – learning about new rules and how they are applied locally, where key working fits in with that. (RP_TP1c)

Impact on working with other professionals

ES&KW training also encouraged participants to think about how to approach other professionals they work with, using Key Working functions as a way to improve their practice:

Possibly the emphasis on key working functions rather than the key working role could convince practitioners who seem to be less than dedicated and hard working but who are actually just overworked and stressed. (RP_TP2b)

Impact in working with families

Families' involvement in ES&KW training also had an important impact on training participants' views of parent's perceptions. The contact between practitioners and families during ES&KW training was again underlined as central to the materialization of Early Support's ethos and principles:

I am now able to appreciate and have gained a greater understanding of some aspects of parents' perceptions of the changes and impacts that having a child with needs can have on a family, work ethos, the extended family and friends. (...) Families can react in various ways and need to be supported throughout or as much as possible. (RP_TP1b)

Suggestions for further work between families and professionals, based on the training's contents, were also proposed:

Convincing practitioners of the value of going the extra mile by exposing them to families reporting about the difference that Early Support 'helping' processes make. (RP_TP2b)

Considering the **extent to which ES&KW training impacted on participants with previous experience and knowledge about ES&KW**, some highlighted the reassurance it gave them

about the way they were conducting their practices, although affirming it didn't necessarily change their practice:

I am not sure that the training has changed anything – I have been working in the field of Early Support for over two years now and I was already fully cognizant of the key working functions and ethos of Early Support. However, it was gratifying to discover that my own practice and ethos still reflects that expected and portrayed within the training. It was also useful to revisit some of the overarching principles to refresh my aims and goals in these areas. (RP_TP2a)

Yet, other experienced participants in ES&KW underlined specific training contents that were particularly important to reframe their practice:

It has reminded me about the key areas of Key working (the Key working functions), their individual importance and how they fit together. Although so integral to my work, the assessment and planning part of Early Support had somehow slipped out of my description/perception of the key working role. I also now look at a family and ask myself are the four areas being covered (not necessarily by the same person) and look for any gaps and how they can be filled. (RP_TP2a)

When asked to concretely reflect about ES&KW training's impact in the future, namely in participants' organizations, but also in their own practices and in the practices of their co-workers, participants highlighted their aim to expand the concepts and practices of ES&KW to health and social care domains:

Early Support and Key Working are the central components of my team's functions within the local authority. On a wider, strategic level, this is something I am working to expand throughout partner agencies in health and social care (and in other teams within the local authority). (RP_TP2a)

The same training participant also stressed the need to work on crucial skills to empower practitioners' approach to children, young children and families and other professionals, in non-judgmental, person-centered way, affirming the use of ES&KW principles and specific parts of the training to address this aim:

Some of the 'softer' skills required for key working are more difficult to disseminate, but I feel these are the most crucial elements in offering Key working and Early Support with integrity to its underpinning ethos. By this, I mean the skills required to be approachable, non-judgmental and acting with understanding but maintaining a person-centred approach. This is something I am working hard to address and I will now use the principles and parts of the training to further address this. (RP_TP2a)

The process of Reflective Practice, completed throughout the two months that followed the ES&KW training, aimed to increase training participants' capacity to relate the training's contents to their own beliefs, skills and practice and to project these contents into their way of working. During this ongoing process, links between training contents and participants' daily lives were developed, thus encouraging renewed approaches in their work with children and young children with SEND and their families, and other professionals. All proposed exercises were carefully designed to meet this goal.

Considering the positive impact of the Reflective Practice process, and since several participants revealed during training observations that they didn't do the Pre or Interim readings' proposed by Early Support, it seems essential that they are motivated and supported to do so, in order to develop training awareness and its practical transference. Follow up mentoring work should also be considered, including continued Reflective Practice and periodical support, after the ES&KW training. This is an internationally recommended evidence based practice²⁵ in favour of training's concrete impact and materialization into professionals' practices. Without it training impact might fade.

We will now look at the ES&KW training impact throughout the individual interviews - these were concluded after the Reflective Practice, and correspond to the final stage of the research that aims to understand the impact of ES&KW training on training participants, a few months after the training was concluded.

Early Support and Key Working training impact considered through follow up individual interviews

Training participants were individually interviewed in their workplace²⁶ about the impact of ES&KW training. After a period of three to four months after ES&KW training, we again attempted to understand if and how the training impacted upon the participants beliefs, skills and practice in connection to the trainings contents and delivery; we namely looked for the presence of Key Working functions in their work with children and young children with SEND, their families, and with other professionals.

Two of the training participants invited us to spend the interview day with them, allowing us to shadow part of their daily work and to observe the practical expression of Key Working functions with a families and professionals they work with. This gave us the privileged opportunity to observe training participants way of working with families and to closely discuss some of their everyday challenges. These dialogues occurred while travelling between visits to families' homes or on our way to and from interviewing families, as we will further on present.

In these interviews we carefully listened to their views about the training and its impact. We openly asked them to look back to the ES&KW training, to choose the most important things they gained knowledge of, and in what ways, if any, did this training changed their practice.

One of the participants – a nursery coordinator that for the first time became informed of ES&KW through the training – stressed the value of learning about Early Intervention, and of

²⁵ As Trivette, Dunst, Hamby and O'Herin (2009) highlight, considering evidence based practices in in-service training, "results showed that the adult learning methods were most effective when used with a small number of learners (< 30) for more than 10 hours **on multiple occasions.**"

Joshua Sparrow (2013) also underlines that "effects of single trainings drift and fade without longitudinal reinforcement that includes experiential opportunities to apply new learning in practice" stressing that "professional development cannot be effective and sustained without carefully coordinated organizational development" to support and empower training effects.

²⁶ Since the last ES&KW training observed took place in June 2013, its last group of training participants didn't complete the follow up individual interviews – given that the Report's delivery date was two months after the training, it didn't allow the necessary minimum period of three months between the end of the training and the follow-up interview.

taking the initiative to work with families and ask for other professionals for support if a child showed potential special educational needs:

[What] I really took with myself was the Early Intervention – as soon as you even think that it might be needed, you need to start [to work on it] otherwise it might be late. After the training we started to take more actions ourselves.

[It's important] To have support and information and specialist support - we should do it on an everyday basis, because lots of parents that come don't have a clue of what they're entitled to - they're very multi-cultural over here (...) it's really challenging, and they're from different religions as well, so... a very small environment, so many different cultures! (II - TP1a)

Another participant, who previously was apprehensive about the future of those with a Key Worker role, now seemed more tranquil about it, stressing as the major impact of the ES&KW training her renewed perspective of Working in Partnership. The composition of the training group - different professionals and a parent – was decisive to reach this understanding:

The most important thing was enhancing my learning of Work in Partnership with all the different professionals and the parents, and to listen to the parent's voice, and not just to make assumptions. To have a parent there, parent's that are on the course, and speaking to them not in a key worker role... it made me have a different train of thought; (...) I've learnt to listen more, and being more attuned to what the parents want and feel. (II – TP1b)

This participant also highlighted the implication of training and of the Reflective Practice exercises in (re)thinking her practice, and underlined that ES&KW training would have been truly useful before she started working as a Key worker:

This training helped me a great deal and the reflective practices as well because it makes you think all the time (...) I should've really done this course before [when starting the key worker role] because it would have really helped me (...) it opened my eyes to a lot more. (II – TP1b).

A different participant underlined the importance of understanding the new Early Support and Key Working approach, particularly stressing the relevance of the Key Working functions:

What was interesting was looking at the approach that Early Support was now taking, given that it's now part of an Early Support consortium, with new approach going for it... so for me the interest in content was more about changes, the approach that was taken to it and how that was being presented (...) particularly looking at the Key Working functions was how they were presenting that, that differed from focusing on a Key worker role. I found that quite interesting. (II – TP1a).

The Key Working functions were also highlighted by a pilot training participant that shared with us how the training's contents were present in her practice, namely while coordinating multi agency work and chairing Team Around the Child (TAC) meetings:

I often ask professionals "what would the child think about that idea?" "Have you asked the child about this?" I also make sure that the priorities for the family and the priorities for the child/young person are discussed at the beginning of the meeting. Any actions/plans will then relate to these specific priorities. We will also focus on the positive aspects of a child's life – what is working well and try to clearly understand why this works. I also make sure that the

parent/child/young person speaks first in a TAC meeting about their own experiences and that they are listened to by all of the professionals attending the meeting. (IQ – PTP2b)

Another training participant highlighted the importance of this training in valuing a different approach to Key Working, underlined by the Key Working functions. This participant also stressed the importance of recognizing that this was the approach her team had already been taking in the last few years:

It was a bit of a surprise, Key Working functions, but I found it actually a useful way of looking at it. (...) I think in the past three or four years in practice that’s what we’ve been providing, it felt we were getting that right, and the training validated that - this is the reality, this is how it works. We’ve devised a new Key Working leaflet, which I will show you, based on that, based on the functions, and I’m looking at it and thinking, “Yes, this is good, this is exactly what we offer”. (II – TP2b)

This new leaflet, aimed at families, materializes the new Key Working approach. Figure 8, shows the contents of the previous and the actual leaflet, underlining the renewed focus on the Key Working functions.

Key worker	Key working
<p>What is a Key worker?</p> <p>A key worker can be a professional from any relevant discipline (health, social services and education) who is trained and supported to be a part of our key worker scheme. Key workers are both a source of support for disabled children and their families, and a link by which other services are accessed and used efficiently.</p> <p>Key workers are responsible for ensuring that everyone a family deals with is working together effectively and to the same plan. Key workers are often allocated to families who are involved with a very large number of different professionals and organizations in order to help make sure that care plans are well coordinated.</p> <p>What will a Key Worker do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visit you at home on a regular basis - Listen to your concerns - Be a voice for you and your family - Provide information about services and care - Promote a positive view of your child and family - Provide practical help such as with appointments - Be part of child planning meetings with you. 	<p>What is Key working?</p> <p>Key working is an approach involving the following areas of support;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emotional and practical support including helping with difficult decisions. - Coordination including being your first point of contact - Getting to know your child and family with a view to identifying needs and strengths in order to create a single plan agreed by all concerned - Providing accurate information at the right time. <p>Key working aims to ensure that the team around the child is working together effectively and to the same plan. Key working is prioritized when children are involved with a very large number of different professionals and organizations in order to help make sure that care plans are well coordinated. You may have one key worker or more than one, a multi-agency meeting and a plan which will work towards achieving the best outcomes for your child in partnership with you.</p>
Who will get a Key Worker?	Who will have access to Key working?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Families living in this region - The child/children must be 0-8 years have complex needs arising from disability and/or complex health needs - The child will require input from 3 or more specialist services over time - Families who would most benefit from coordination of services. 	

Figure 8. Leaflets contents before and after the ES&KW training - from Key Worker role to Key Working functions

The same training participant also highlighted the meaning this training had for invigorating professionals to work with families in a way that truly improves their quality of life:

I'm just really pleased that it feels like at last the training is being offered, the new training, the new materials, and I think it was what we needed – we needed some impetus (...) I feel that the families have reasonable services but we all need re-enthusing and this is the way, the mechanism to do it really, so I'm just please it started. (II – TP2b)

We also observed that from the group of training participants interviewed three carried on with doing training, through Training for Trainers (T4T). This enthusiasm in becoming themselves ES&KW trainers was connected to their motivation to work with practitioners in their team and with other professionals and families in their region, sharing this new Key Working approach. Two of these training participants underlined that T4T was more relevant for them, since it better met their expectations and needs. Again they underlined that having training participants with none to some knowledge about ES&KW in the ES&KW training, was a setback to the possibility of reaching deeper into the training's contents:

What happened actually in between was quite interesting, because in between I did the training where we delivered the training [T4T] I actually found that training more useful, more relevant, more inspiring then the original one. I think it was because there were a lot of people on the training [ES&KW training] to whom the whole thing is completely new, and so you felt you were covering old ground (...) [in T4T] we were all basically at the same level, we had experience of delivering either a Key Working project or training. I just took a lot more out of it. And I felt it was a bit more inspiring really, for the future. (II – TP2b)

Through individual follow up interviews, we observed that ES&KW training had a significant impact on all training participants interviewed, either in a reassuring way ("it felt we were getting that right") or in a transformational way ("it made me have a different train of thought").

*The extent of this impact seems to be connected to the participants' knowledge and experience about Early Support and Key Working – for participants with more experience and knowledge, this training mostly had a reassuring impact. Because after the ES&KW training some participants' did Training for Trainers (T4T), they were able to compare both trainings, highlighting that since T4T participants had similar level of experience and knowledge, this allowed them to discuss and reflect upon training contents in a more in-depth, useful and relevant way. We also acknowledge through training observations that having in the same training group participants with none to substantial experience in ES&KW, was, at times, limiting their capacity to expand their knowledge in a more in depth way. Thus, **it's important to consider and evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of offering the same training to practitioners and parents with large variations in experience and knowledge about ES&KW.***

6. Key Working functions throughout Families' voices

To understand the impact of Key Working on families and children's well being and quality of life, in the final stage of the research, families training participants worked with as Key workers or co-key workers were interviewed²⁷. All families had children with complex additional needs, requiring "a high level of support from a wide range of statutory and/or specialist and targeted services, to help them achieve the best possible outcomes" (Early Support, Trainers' guide day 1, 2013), thus particularly benefiting from the Key Working support.

We will now briefly describe the interviewed families:

Kay's²⁸ family (1 year)

Kay is one year old and lives with eight of her nine brothers and sisters, aged twenty to two years old. She has Down Syndrome and was born with complex health needs, including imperforate anus, hydrocephalus, feeding issues/severe reflux, seizure activity and hearing loss. She spent long periods of time in hospital with her mother since she was born. Recently Kay has been admitted to hospital as she has feeding problems with severe reflux, bowel movements, and her stoma site is problematic. However, at the moment, she is at home and since her health is improving - Kay is more alert and making good developmental progress, namely in communication.

Professionals that visit the family can communicate any updates in a black note book that Kay's mother keeps at home and this also allows her to keep a copy of the comments and professional visitors to comment and read accordingly.

Mother is of Somalian heritage and moved to Holland at a young age. She is living in the UK for the last eight years and sometimes finds it difficult to express herself in English.

Kay's mother has recently undertaken a short Makaton Course and is very approachable with any help that she can provide to help with Kay's complex health needs.

Melanie, one of the ES&KW training participant's involved in the research, was her designated key worker for the last eight months.

John's family (4 years)

John is four years old with profound and multiple disabilities, including four limb cerebral palsy and a hearing impairment. He lives at home with both his parents and his older brother. John's family has recently been considering how they can adapt their property to meet their son's ongoing needs.

Both parents came from Russia to the UK a few years ago. John's father has been a parent representative on an Early Support Steering Group for around a year now and has been very committed to attending and offering a wider parent perspective to the multi-agency professionals.

John has been attending a mainstream nursery and his key worker has worked closely with all involved to coordinate the services to support his time in nursery. Several multi-agency meetings were held for the family (every 6 months), mainly encompassing education as well as equipment, medical investigations and feeding. During these meetings John's mother often shares information with the group about the research she has done in terms of feeding, vestibular stimulation etc. which the group find really valuable. The group has acknowledged to John's mother how her research has broadened

²⁷ Training participants worked with the interviewed families *before* they started the ES&KW training, so a direct link between what families affirmed in their interviews and ES&KW training by itself shouldn't be established; however, since ES&KW training had a concrete reassuring or transformational impact on training participants way of working, potentially it had influence on their Key Working approach to children and families.

²⁸ All family and ES&KW training participants' names are fictional.

their own knowledge and skills base.

A recent transition meeting was held for John to plan for his start at a specialist school in September. Attendees included Physio, Occupational and Speech and Language Therapists', Educational Psychologist and representatives from his current nursery and future school. During this meeting practical aspects were discussed (equipment, transport, feeding) as well as more holistic aspects such as John's likes and dislikes, preference for learning and parents' hopes for the future.

Carol, also an ES&KW training participant, has been Key Working with John and his family for the last 18 months.

Anna and Mary's Family (4 years)

Anna and Mary are two of four year old triplets, with significant disabilities, including hydrocephalus, respiratory difficulties and developmental delay. Both parents have learning difficulties and the whole family lives with the triplet's grandmother and grandfather. Anna and Mary spent the long periods of time in hospital when they were born and in the first two years of their lives.

Numerous multi-agency meetings have been held for them, helping support the family to coordinate around 18-20 professionals at any one time. Meetings were held when the children transitioned into nursery and, most recently, planning for them to start school in September. Family was also supported to access support from both children's and adult's social care. The parents are also hoping for some support to find a training course once the children go into school.

Carol has been working with this family for around two years'. They also have a non-designated key worker whose main role is as a Speech and Language therapist. However, she works only two days a week and so they agreed that Carol would take a joint key working role with her to support the family.

David's family (7 years)

David is 7 years old and lives with his older eleven years' sister and his mother. David is a child with complex behavioral problems.

When David's family came to the UK, David went to a mainstream school where staff found David's needs difficult to address, asking for support for David and his family.

David's mother is from Nigeria and English is her second language. She sometimes has difficulties in expressing herself in English.

At first, Key Working was very intensive since David needed a new school and various services to help David and his mother to cope with David's needs.

Recently David, his sister and mother moved from a two bedroom place to an apartment where David has his own room. David also moved to a specialist school, which offers most of the educational support and therapies he needs.

David's mother is currently going to a Parent Group and finds these transformations in David's and in her family's life extremely beneficial.

Claire, another ES&KW training participant, is working with David's family for the last two years.

William (2 years)

William is a two years old child with very high medical/health needs. Health is extremely vulnerable, with frequent medical emergencies. He lives with his mother and a seven years old brother. William's family has their own health needs. However, they are also tremendously resilient and creative and pull together as a family. Priority for the family is to do everything to make life as positive and enjoyable as possible for both the very young child with severe impairments and his older sibling.

Main need and priority has been William's survival through life threatening episodes, re-housing and

the initiation of therapeutic services and equipment.

Claire and a Portage worker have tried as far as possible to ensure that the Key working functions are met for the last 18 months.

Kay's, John's, David and William's mothers, and Anna and Mary's mother and grandmother, were interviewed. All families chose to be interviewed in their homes, at a convenient time for them, except for one family interviewed in the training participant's workplace²⁹. Three families had their children with them during the interview making this a privileged time to learn about these families' interactions with their children and about the challenges of their daily life. It was important to interview families in their home environment, where they felt secure to speak about themselves, their children and the impact of Key Working in their lives.

We will now look at these families' thoughts and experiences about Key Working, linking them with the **Key Working 'functions'**³⁰.

1. Emotional and practical support

There are a lot of people that would be your key worker, [but] they don't have the good heart to see you, they'll just tell you this and this... **She knows me.**

FI, David's family - TP1b

1a. Providing emotional and practical support as required, as part of a trusting relationship

In all interviews families were welcoming, pleased to share their views about Key Working and to participate in the research. Families underlined their knowledgeable role in defining the impact of a Key Working approach:

It's really good to know that people are listening because families are the ones that know. (FIGM, Anna and Mary's family, TP2a)

[It's important families are interviewed] because we're the ones that go for it. (FI, William's family, TP2b)

²⁹ This family was invited and generously accepted to do the interview just a few hours before it occurred, since the child from the first invited family was suddenly ill.

³⁰ **Key Working 'functions'**

Emotional and practical support

- Providing emotional and practical support as required, as part of a trusting relationship
- Enabling and empowering the child, young person and their family to make decisions and use their personalised budgets in a way that is most effective for them

Coordination

- Being a single point of regular and consistent contact for the child, young person and family
- Facilitating multiagency meetings
- Coordinating services and practitioners around the child, young person and family

Planning and assessment

- Supporting a single planning and joint assessment process
- Identifying the strengths and needs of all family members

Information and specialist support

- Providing information and signposting where necessary
- Advocating on the child's, young person's and/or family's behalf where appropriate
- Facilitating clinical care seamlessly integrated with specialist and universal services, where appropriate.

Kay's mother was particularly welcoming, underlining how important Key Working was in her life:

Kay's mother opened the door with a large smile and a friendly greeting – “Welcome, welcome, please come in!”. Her first words immediately expressed great joy and appreciation about Melanie's work as Key worker. (...) The interview felt like a celebration of the trusting relationship that Kay's mother and Melanie, the family's Key worker, had established. (FI, Kay's family, TP1a)

In fact, “Providing emotional and practical support as required, as part of a trusting relationship”, seemed to underpin other Key Working (KW) Functions in most interviews – although all KW functions were highlighted by the interviewed families, this trusting relation was foundational for other KW functions to emerge - families go beyond the Key workers' formal role and functions to focus on the trustful relation established between them.

It's more than a profession, it's a friendship as well (...) **I trust her a hundred per cent.** (FI, William's family, TP2b)

She knows and she understands where we're coming from; she understands, and she knows what it's like... **we know we can trust her.** It's not somebody coming in that just got it out of a book. (...) She does fit into the family. (FI, Anne and Mary's family, TP2a)

Felling respected and listened to seems fundamental in building this trustful relation:

There are a lot of people that would be your key worker, they don't have the good heart to see you – they'll just tell you this and this... **she knows me.** She really helped me a lot. (FI, David's family, TP1b)

When I'm in hospital I call her. I was not happy, really, I'm crying... and **when I call her I cool down.** (FI, Kay's family, TP1b)

In fact, when families speak about their key workers they emphasize what their life was like *before* and *after* the key working support. Feelings of deep loneliness and distress are progressively contrasted with feelings of hope and a sense of security in being supported to face complex circumstances:

She gave me hope, she puts hope and puts smile upon me, when there was nothing... It's like when you've been abandoned, you are nobody, you're frustrated, you don't know what to do. We didn't know where to go since we were new in the country... so much to learn, especially when you have a special needs child. So Claire putted a smile again, raised the hope... so that's what I'll say - she's a guiding angel (FI, David's family, TP2b)

We have come a long way, a long journey. It's the not knowing where to turn or who to turn to, for that advice and support. Because, for the first two years, nobody told us that there was support link you are very lonely. You're lonely. (...) Eventually the home nurse said: “Have you heard of Early Support years?” And fortunately Carol arrived on the door step and never looked back (...). Carol has been our absolute life line. (FI, Anne and Mary's family, TP2a)

Families also underlined the importance of having the emotional and practical support when they need it and stress their confidence to ask their key workers all sorts of questions:

I absolutely adore Claire, she's brilliant, she really does work for what we need for William (...) she's there at the end of the phone if I need her, [for] something as silly as, you know, posting a letter, collecting prescription, she'll do it for me, which is really, really nice because every day is a struggle really. (FI, William's family, TP2b)

I ask her the most stupid questions, sometimes... but she comes back and she gives me an answer. (FI, Anne and Mary's family, TP2a)

Through Kay and David mothers' interviews, it was also understandable that their key workers work *with* them, helping families to understand what's involved in particular situations, so they can face them autonomously in similar future circumstances:

With Melanie we **understand together**, but [with] another people, new faces, I get the letter, I go, and it's very hard to understand. She's very special for me. (FI, Kay's family, TP1b)

When I go to school they tell me this is this. I will be quiet there, but when I get out I call Claire and say – "Please can you inform me in this area, what it is about?" **She will give me more knowledge about it so, in case next time I come across this I'll know what to do, to say, to have my idea about it, to decide about it** (FI, David's family, TP2b)

This particular experience of working together is central to empower families making decisions, namely using their personalized budgets in a way that is most effective for them, as highlighted in the next KW function.

1b. Enabling and empowering the child, young person and their family to make decisions and use their personalized budgets in a way that is most effective for them

Throughout the interviews, families shared several important moments when they felt enabled and empowered by their key workers to make their own decisions. These are aligned with the respectful and trustful relationship previously described. One particular case illustrates how the key worker supported the use of a personalized budget, in the most effective way *for the family*. It was only in the course of the key worker approach that this family was heard and respected in *their choice*³¹:

Carol understands where we're all coming from, she knows the family dynamic, everybody (...) It's about listening to what we want, not what other people want, what they think we need. (...) People don't understand that they need to know that those are *their* truth and *their* values, because what *they* feel is right or wrong is not necessarily what other people feel... and it's not their business; they should not dictate to me what they feel should happen. (FIGM, Anna and Mary's family, TP2a_ Appendix 8)

Another family also highlighted the importance of making their own decisions. As we will describe further on, this family was particularly discontented about the support they received from Health services during John's first years of life. At the moment, their key worker and team are trying to progressively improve her confidence, by standing by her in family decisions and acknowledging how her research has broadened their own knowledge and skills base. Thus, at the moment, John's mother is starting to affirm her satisfaction about the way professionals listen and try to follow the family's choices. Particularly, she describes her decision of changing the way John is fed, shifting from pipe to spoon feeding. Although some risks are involved, professionals respected John's mother decision giving her their full support through this process so these risks could be reduced:

It was hard, but now we realize that if we want to save our selves, it's our job (...) and we're doing alright. Luckily they're [professionals] accepting the limitation of their profession and (...) they are trying to be sympathetic to me, and I'm grateful for that, because it's a little beyond

³¹ Complete interview descriptions about each particular situation referred by families related to KW functions can be found in attach in Appendix 8.

their job descriptions (...) I was always reaching beyond what they could do, and they were accepting it. I'm very happy that she [therapist] knew the risks [involved in changing the way John was fed] and she was trying to accept it, trying to make it less risky, and advising us, [about] what to do. (FI, John's family, TP2b)

This decision, also closely connected to Key Working functions involving Planning and Assessment, proved to be successful to John, John's mother and to professionals:

Because he was eating by spoon, he improved. It created a challenge upon his brain – swallow, swallow, swallow - and he improved. According to Speech and Language therapist he is much, much better than he was before. (FI, John's family, TP2b)

We acknowledged through family interviews that key workers try to support families' concrete needs aiming to build a trustful relation where families' strengths are central. As Early Support Principles highlight, all families are unique, and this uniqueness demands singular approaches. Listening and respecting families on every possible occasion empowers and enables families to make their own decisions. As Anna and Mary's grandmother proudly said when speaking about her daughter:

She's gained a lot of strength (...) from these kids, she really has; she's was quite timid [but] **she's got a big voice now!** (FIGM, Anna and Mary's family, TP2a)

2. Coordination

- **Being a single point of regular and consistent contact for the child, young person and family**

All families underlined the importance of key Working functions around coordination. Because their children have multiple and complex needs a large number of professionals are involved in supporting them:

When people say to me "Who's he under?" I'm like "Who's he *not* under, really?" It's easier to tell you who he's not with than who he is with... (FI, William's family, TP2b)

This coordination involves having a single point of regular and consistent contact for families and their child/children. Kay's mother shared the importance key working had in her capacity to organize and make sense of the multiple appointments and services related to Kay:

Coming to so much appointments, helping with so many letters I don't understand... before Melanie I would look somewhere for advice, you know... somewhere... but when she came I was so happy! (FI, Kay's family, TP1b).

Nevertheless, as previously underlined, this initial intensive support progressively changed enabling Kay's mother to become more confident about this organization:

Every morning when I wake up, I start my job and I think... today is Monday, what do I have? Today is Thursday, today is Friday, you know? (FI, Kay's family, TP1b)

William's mother also emphasizes the importance of having a regular and consistent contact to face difficult situations around services, when all her individual efforts seem hopeless:

I just wasn't getting anywhere, you know, it's like banging your head against a brick wall so I wrote letter after letter and in the end I rang Claire and I just broke down (...) and she helped me, she got what we needed to get (...) Claire's support and her letters and obviously her status

of what she is and what she does, that has been a massive, massive help (FI, William's family, TP2b)

- **Facilitating multi-agency meetings**

Key workers' skills and competence to facilitate multi-agency meetings are also highlighted and appreciated as fundamental in family's lives. John's mother emphasizes multi-agency meetings facilitation as the most valued function of the key worker's support to her family. She highlights the discrete and informal yet particularly effective role their key worker has in assuring all professionals are involved and accountable for decisions taken throughout those meetings:

What I like about Carol is [that] she is very efficient, for those paper people... sometimes paper is more important than people... but Carol she's brilliant! I think it's so interesting how she deals with it. We had this multidisciplinary meeting [recently] (...) she's there quietly writing, writing, writing... amazing how quickly she catches everything! (...) She doesn't do it in a very sort of standoff, official way - we sit in almost sort of in a round table, around a coffee table... but at the same time she knows this balance... So it's a very easy going meeting, very relaxing, and at the same time it's all fixed on the paper. When she finishes the meeting, she quickly sends the résumé to others, of other disciplines. (FI, John's family, TP2a_Appendix 8)

- **Coordinating services and practitioners around the child, young person and family**

Coordinating services and practitioners around the child, young person and family was singularly emphasized by Anna and Mary's grandmother and mother as an important KW function. They particularly valued their key workers role in changing the location of multi-agency meetings to their home, and setting it on a convenient date for the family:

At times, we had almost about 20 people [working with Anne and Mary], all professionals. They come here now, because I said "I can't do this, I can't travel around...", and that's where Carol and Rita [key workers], they coordinated everybody; they literally called everybody: "You have to come to family home, because they can't do it".

Carol coordinates it in the day that I don't work so I don't have to take time out work. Although they are very good [at work], I don't have to ask for time out, and then I don't have to explain why or what's going on, things that they don't really need to know. (FIGM, Anna and Mary's family, TP2a)

Anna and Mary's family also underlined the importance of understanding the language professionals' use, and described how they asked professionals to avoid jargon:

Professionals, when they first came, they used their language, and we just stopped them. (Grandmother);

Yes! We don't understand... Stop saying that, I don't know what you're talking about. (Mother);

We said - "No jargon!" (Grandmother) (FI, Anna and Mary's family, TP2a)

They highlighted how positive and empowering it was to have services organized around their particular needs, and valued the fact their family has a key worker (Carol, ES&KW training participant) and a co-key worker (Rita), acknowledging that it is also important that they can support each other in their demanding KW functions:

Carol literally coordinates everybody, makes sure they all know what they're doing; she gets everyone together and between her and Rita they take all the minutes. They complement each other so well (...) I think it's good having two Key Workers; it just takes the pressure of them as well, because we're not the only family they support and we have to remember that (...) [they do have] lots of other roles, in different places. (FIGM, Anna and Mary's family, TP2a)

Closely connected to the KW Coordination group of functions, we find the KW functions related to Planning and assessment. We will now look at what families shared during their interviews about them.

3. Planning and assessment

- **Supporting a single planning and joint assessment process**

This Key Working function was the less mentioned in an explicit way, although it was implicitly linked with other KW functions, namely with those related to Coordination.

Nevertheless, William's family talked about the importance of having the key worker's support to materialize planning in everyday life:

Some days I think "Oh, I've got to do this, I've got to do that" and I just can't get with it; it's easy when you're thinking about it but trying to put it into place is another thing. So when I sit with Claire and I'm like "Right, I got to do this" and she's like "Right, we're going to do that, and we're going to do this..." and it's all put into place. (FI, William's family, TP2b)

John's mother, on the other hand, shared her view about the gap between what is planned and done to support her child and the continuous scientific advancements/research into brain development. She explained that, in her perspective, the National Health System (NHS) only *manages a condition*, failing to address John's real health needs and namely those connected with the development of his brain, in an optimal time for him. She illustrated this with a strong metaphor:

It's very strange for me. Although there are so many amazing researches about brain and it's quite a mainstream sort of psychology, or neurology, brain plasticity... what they discovered every five minutes, the technology to scan the brain, every angle, every action, every experience that is changing the brain, for some reason, it's all there, but [when] it comes to the treatment they say – "Oh, it's not proven; we haven't got any study on it that it works." So the position of NHS is to manage the condition.

Sometimes it seems like... just to give you illustration:

You're swimming in the ocean; life is throwing you in the ocean and there is no shore surrounding you. And there are people around with comfortable boards, floating; your beating your legs, [and they] say – "We're giving you prosthetics, don't worry, you will carry on; (...) there's a special service to give you respire care; If you can't carry on anymore or if you're going crazy, we give you counseling..." All I need is a little straw to clutch, that someone knows where the shore is so we, [to] little by little, move in a certain direction. But unfortunately, I've spent four years from one therapist to another therapist; from one doctor to another doctor, trying to get someone who has hope, who will say, "This thing works; do that, it will improve...", someone's faith in it! This is a kid. Everything in his brain and in his body, every fiber, wants to live! (...) Unfortunately, in NHS, I couldn't see the attitude, the right attitude, even to give me a hope, like... just do something! (FI, John's family, TP2a)

To help closing this gap, John's mother wished the neuropsychiatrist, they recently met, shared more of his knowledge with her and with the professionals working with her son. She explained how she needs to research to know what to ask him, and shared the difficulties of doing it; she also shared how it would be important for her to "have him on board" to help the team with John's assessment and planning:

Six months ago, we met for the first time a neuropsychiatrist (...) from his position, he could access everything, but again (...) every time when we're trying to get knowledge out of him, (...) I need to research what to ask him. So **I need to know what button to push to get it otherwise he wouldn't tell me anything.** And unfortunately it takes colossal time out of my time to research because, on top, I am a foreigner; the professional language is very difficult to me anyway. (...) If he knows, for example, he could tell me music impacts on brain plasticity and explain to me how it works and what I could do for John (...) just a small thing, to help or to have a little bit of faith.

[it would be important] if we had [him] on board, not maybe physically but maybe virtually, someone who did assessment (...) someone that is able, and who is knowledgeable enough to bring the whole overview. (F1, John's family – TP2a)

These very intense views about the NHS and the connection between professionals working with the family and the child seem to exactly underline the need for a Single Education, Health and Care plan, that progressively appeals and creates conditions for professionals from all areas and hierarchies to work together in a child and family centered way.

- **Identifying the strengths and needs of all family members**

Several of the interviewed families highlighted the Key worker role in supporting, directly or indirectly, all family members - direct support particularly involved children's' siblings; indirect support was brought up about housing support or the use of personal budgets, that increased the quality of each family's life.

Considering the support given to children's siblings, Anna and Mary's grandmother emphasized Carol's important role with their triplet brother, who also needed support in school:

She was amazing making sure that Peter wasn't excluded, because everybody is focused on the two girls. (...) They [in Peter's school] were talking about keeping Peter back, because he won't talk in school. He's very, very shy; his confidence [is low] because his [receiving] mixed messages all the time. Carol coordinated the meeting and sorted it all out. (FIGM, Anna and Mary's family – TP2a).

We will now look at the Key functions connected to Information and specialist support, underlining aspects related to them reported by the interviewed families.

4. Information and specialist support

- Providing information and signposting where necessary
- Facilitating clinical care seamlessly integrated with specialist and universal services, where appropriate.

- Advocating on the child's, young person's and/or family's behalf where appropriate

Providing information and signposting is underlined by all families interviewed as essential. As previously presented, for most families there is a time *before* and *after* Key Working – their Key workers stand for clarity and consistency about services and practical support to families. David's mother reveals how Claire's support had a concrete influence in several fundamental aspects of their life, including David's school transition to a more appropriate school for his needs, and solving a difficult situation connected with housing. In both cases, Claire advocated on the child and family's behalf:

We were staying in two bedrooms, David was hitting and the neighbors came, they complain, they call the police [but] she knows me. I always tell her – "Claire, I'm who I am; I don't have anything [hidden], so if I tell you something believe me." (...) When we moved, it was because of this letter; she took me to a social career so they speeded the house [moving]. (FI, David's family, TP2b)

This support had a strong impact on David's and his family's well being, remarkably described by David's mother:

David has his own room. In the morning, when I see David, he was very happy to be in his room, jumping and playing... I said: "Oh! It's Claire that puts that smile [on David's face]" I didn't know there was more love in this boy he was playing, jumping... I mean, he was happy! When I saw him so happy, I called Claire and said: "All is just..." I said "Thank you". She said: "No, it's not me..." and I said: "You started it you wrote to the Council, you don't see the smile you give to this boy!" (FI, David's family – TP2b)

The power of information and specialist support on children's and families' lives is also clear when the interviewed families describe how new knowledge and materials impacted in their child's development and in their well being. Kay's mother shared the impact of the Makaton training she completed to establish communication with Kay and how she involved her siblings in this process; she also shared Kay will have a new chair and how that chair will help meeting Kay's needs and enhance her development.

These last three weeks I see her smiling; now she is starting to know her mum and I told my children to start the Makaton - we have the book, we read how to use (...) talk with your hands, it's very good. (FI, Kay's family, TP1b).

It's good to train her for sit up, that chair is very good – we can give her food, has a table for food and toys to play, because now I feed her [and] I don't give her freedom... I hold her and she doesn't like that, she's fighting for her freedom! That chair with table, I can put there the toys and at the same time I can feed her. She can sit higher or lower; it's very good! (FI, Kay's family, TP1b).

David's mother highlighted the importance of following an established plan that supported David and his family's needs facing his complex behavioral problems:

David wasn't going to bed on time, so we talked about it and we have a plan, what to do. When we come back home, we have a picture – "Remove your shoes, wash your hands, time to play and after time to go to bed" so it was useful. So... experience, learning! I get to learn a lot of things, it's useful to me. If I didn't have a key worker I wouldn't get that... (FI, David's family, TP2b)

Families also expressed their hope and trust concerning their child's near future, based on choices done with professionals and their key worker's. John's mother talked about John's transition to a new school and how she hopes to have a voice about the way he will be supported there; she also underlines that, beside meeting John's needs, the fact John will be going for longer periods of time to school can also meet her own needs, namely of having sometime for herself:

I'm very hopeful about the school because it's a new environment, lots of young people there who are keen to make the difference (...) they have a team of specialists on one hand, NHS specialists, and on the other hand, they're there to educate him. So one way or another (...) I would like them to listen a little bit to what could be done and if they could accommodate my desires we could do a lot! (...) [When] he goes to school hopefully it will give me a little bit of time in the morning to prepare myself before meeting them in the afternoon and then it will be a little bit easier. (FI, John's family – TP2b)

Families moreover shared their views about what helped them feeling supported and empowered. Many of the referred subjects – from as parent and community support groups to the empowerment of families themselves – are closely connected to the Key Working functions, namely of information and signposting that meets each family needs:

Support from Parent groups

We go every week to the Down Syndrome group, with other parents, because they're more experienced with Down Syndrome children, this is the first for me in my life; always had healthy children... and its very good because we talk with other parents (FI, Kay's family - TP1b)

There's one workshop we did [where] I learned a lot from other mothers. We talk a lot, you come out it with some ideas; I met one last week... we go, we admire, you think you're the only one with this kind of situation but then you are amazed... and that lifts you up. (FI, David's family - TP1b)

On the other hand, Kay's mother also underlined how she feels helpful supporting other families, based on her own life experience:

My situation is so much happier now. (...) Before I was so young, very scared of the ex-husband, very scared. One day I'm thinking and I knew in my heart – “This husband you can't [stay with him anymore]” and we went separate ways. Since then no one plays with my body or makes me problems... You have to know what you need!

I give them [other parents the same] advice, “Shouting with children, scaring your children, you damage all.” I am not asking about the situation, I tell them the general, “Think about your children” (FI, Kay's family - TP1b)

Kay's mother also stressed the crucial role community and school support have for their children and their family's well being:

Here I like it – nice people, people who are friends, the school together with the Somali community. When I'm in hospital, they call me asking – “Do you need help? Someone to cook, someone to do the shopping?” If I don't have time to pick up my children I call and they pick up and bring children together [which is] very good. I like it and I'm hoping to stay because the Somali they are helping me so much (FI, Kay's family - TP1b)

Several families also highlight the importance of nurseries in regarding their children as children first, and not solely focusing on the child's diagnosis:

What I like about the nursery is that they don't know about this big diagnosis so they look at the kid, and to what they need to teach him (...) they teach him like any other kid and they've got a little bit of faith, they've got faith in him and he responds... it's amazing what they've done – I'm so grateful to his teacher, who worked all this year with him. They did great. (FI, John's family – TP2a)

Final considerations about families views of Key workers and Key Working functions

Families' interviews highlighted their feelings, thoughts and views about their key workers and regarding the impact of KW functions on their children's and family lives; they materialized each KW function in concrete life situations and circumstances, evidencing how key workers support, emotionally and practically, their well being and quality of life, meeting their real needs and strengths.

When describing their life experience before having the Key Working support, families shared a sense of deep uncertainty and lowliness. They stressed how they need professionals - from health, education or social care, and regardless their hierarchical position - to work together, between them and with families, listening and aiming to understand their concrete hopes, strengths and needs.

This underlines the importance of reaching and having multi-agency practitioners in ES&KW training, namely increasing health and social care professionals' participation, to empower a common vision and language based on the Early Support ethos and principles and on Key Working functions.

Final considerations

Between vision and reality – creative tension

The ES&KW training model combines the concepts of Early Support and Key Working. As we before underlined, **Early Support** is *a way of working*, underpinned by 10 principles, aiming to improve the way services are delivered to children and young people with Special Educational Needs and disabilities and their families. These principles focus on ensuring a **person centered approach** (i.e., child, young person and family-centred service delivery) and that practitioner's work in **partnership** together and with children, young people and their families. Through **Key Working**, Early Support aims to ensure that services are enabled to coordinate their activity providing families with a single point of contact and continuity of care and support. Thus, **ES&KW training** is an important vehicle to fulfil desired outcomes - namely ensuring "the provision of holistic care and support to meet the individual requirements and aspirations of the child, young person and their family" (Early Support, 2012, p.5) - what we may call the training's 'vision', clearly present in the training documents produced, namely in "Introduction for trainers" (Early Support, Introduction for trainers, 2013).

On the other hand, this vision strongly interacts with current reality, which includes constraints and barriers connected to the training itself – i.e., Trainer's recruitment, preparation and training; Participant's recruitment and involvement; Families' involvement; Training sequence and contents and Training delivery - but also to the concrete *translation* of trainings' outcomes in participants lives and professional contexts.

The gap between vision and reality, can be described as generating a 'creative tension' (Senge, 2006), a source of energy that drives us to move towards the vision. Throughout the research we looked at the gap between the training vision and current reality in this creative, resourceful way. As a result, we recognized that although ES&KW training had a concrete positive impact in all training participants, whether transformational or reassuring of their present way of working towards the trainings aims and desired outcomes, some gaps between ES&KW vision and reality emerged. We then assembled these research elements in what we designated as **First group of findings – "between vision and reality"**, where we specifically consider ES&KW training cornerstones, initially proposed by Early Support, which weren't utterly present in training delivery.

Moreover, other elements emerged from the research in addition to the former, which were picked up during ES&KW training observations and discussed with trainers' and training participants', including considerations about training's structure, its proposed contents and their connection within the two training days; and the relevance of ES&KW training for more experienced and knowledgeable training participants in of Early Support and Key Working domains'. We gathered them in a second group of research findings, designated as **Second group of findings - rethinking ES&KW projected training**.

We will now recall all points for consideration presented throughout this report – highlighted in blue and italic - within these two groups of findings; this will allow revisiting ES&KW training's initial 'vision' considering the concrete gaps that seemed to occur between the trainings intended aims and its delivery, reflecting on *why* they occurred. This reflection is also

essential to reaffirm or adjust the ES&KW trainings' intentions and aims and, accordantly, to review the training's contents and processes, closely monitoring its delivery.

Considerations based on First group of findings – “between vision and reality”

Before Early Support and Key Working training

Pilot trainings

- *Since Pilot trainings aimed to offer an experimental opportunity to understand the impact of ES&KW training (contents and dynamics/process), training participants should form multi-agency groups - with representatives from Health, Social Services, Education, Voluntary Sector and with parents represented amongst the participants - as strongly recommended by Early Support.*
- *Parents' and Young Peoples' participation should also be enhanced with the recommended Early Support preparation.*
- *The presentation of local documents connected to the Key Working approach during the Pilots, emphasized the need to support locally each training group **after** the training – since contents and processes of Key Working, underpinned by the Early Support principles, are challenging and potentially transformative, the previewed support by Regional Facilitators seems crucial for its achievement.*

Training for trainers (T4T)

- *Pilot trainings clearly showed that training delivery is central to successfully achieve the outcomes of ES&KW training. Therefore, the organization of Training for Trainers (T4T) demands the involvement of experienced ES&KW trainers, very well prepared for delivering ES&KW in all its key dimensions, and capable of considering potential trainers performances against the Lead Early Support Trainer Person Specification and Essential Criteria.*
- *Previous readings are essential to prepare training delivery. It should be stressed that this is a condition for trainers to participate in T4T.*

The Early Support and Key Working *first training impact*

Trainer's recruitment, preparation and training

- *Although the participation of co-trainers in ES&KW deliveries was initially previewed and recommended by Early Support, this didn't happen, except in T4T delivery. From what we observed, the reasons initially invoked for this approach remain truly important and valid; however, if it isn't possible to always have this option, at least when a trainer delivers ES&KW training for the first time the presence and involvement of an experienced trainer as co-trainer it is strongly recommended.*

Participant's recruitment and involvement

- *Since having multi-agency training participants groups is considered fundamental for the trainings proposed outcomes, it is important to (re)consider how to ensure that the process of conducting participants' recruitment, namely involving the Regional Facilitators and Trainers, is implemented as initially projected.*

Family's involvement

- *Preparation to welcome parents as participants is also crucial; it is important that trainers and Regional Facilitators are closely involved in participants' recruitment and that special attention is given to the supporting parents as participants.*

Training delivery

- *ES&KW training recommendations were largely present in trainers' deliveries but some were particularly observed, revealing each trainer's singular strengths in ES&KW training delivery.*
- *Closely observing three different trainers' – with diverse training delivery experience and knowledge about Early Support – underlines the importance of Training for Trainers (T4T), to reinforce trainers' capacity to prepare, deliver and reflect about their delivery. It is particularly important, as previously proposed, that at least in the initial stages of training delivery, an experienced trainer can co-train to support the new ES&KW trainer.*

After the ES&KW training - Participants' voices

- *Considering the positive impact of the Reflective Practice process, and since several participants revealed during training observations that they didn't do the Pre or Interim readings' proposed by Early Support, it seems essential that participants are motivated and supported to do so, in order to develop training awareness and its practical transference.*

Considerations based on Second group of findings – rethinking ES&KW projected training

Before Early Support and Key Working training

Pilot trainings

- *There is an ongoing need, namely at this stage (pilots), to review and reflect about the aims of a projected training and of its approach. For it to be participant led and conducted in the spirit of partnership, participants must have the time to express themselves in different ways (individually, in small groups, in the big group) thus giving them a concrete opportunity to develop and understand the Early Support way of working. The adjustment between each proposed activity and participants' previous knowledge, strengths and needs should be carefully considered and reviewed in this preliminary training phase.*
- *In Pilots it is important to be clear about the extent to which contents and trainings processes can be modified as a result of the Pilot training and the concrete role training participants can (or cannot) have in these transformations.*
- *Critical incident(s) observed emphasize the need for trainers to reflect upon challenging questions when they are trained and be prepared for the possibility of having to address them in an immediate yet sensitive way during the training delivery.*
- *At this pilot stage, trainers' delivery seemed fundamental for the trainings success. In consequence, Training for trainers (T4T) is essential, as it can help ES&KW trainers understand the necessary balance between the trainings projected contents, processes and dynamics, and their necessary adjustments to participants needs. In this context,*

what is 'non negotiable' in ES&KW training and what can be flexible, seems important to be clearly identified and highlighted in T4T.

Training for trainers (T4T)

- *T4T underlines a process of self-reflection and consciousness of each potential trainer pointing towards a mentoring process along the ES&KW training process. As part of T4T, ES&KW novice trainers' should initially **shadow experienced trainers** and **co-train** with them, to enhance these fundamental competences.*
- *Since all delivery proposals need to be clearly structured around the Early Support ethos and principles, the total amount and rhythm of the activities proposed in T4T should be carefully planned, in order to allow these connections to become clear to all potential ES&KW trainers.*

The Early Support and Key Working *first training impact*

Participant's recruitment and involvement

- *To make ES&KW training more accessible to multi-agency participants and parents, it is important that in future training editions the duration and explanation of the contents are considered, involving part a participated discussion and reflection that includes trainers, training participants and parents' needs and perspectives.*

Family's involvement

- *Since parents trained to be parent trainers are described as confident when sharing their experiences, whenever possible, these parents, besides being lead trainers, could also be co-trainers in ES&KW trainings, giving special meaning to the training's aims of promoting partnership and a family centered approach.*

Training sequence and contents

Training participants globally regarded the ES&KW training contents and sequence as well structured and meaningful. Nevertheless several particular aspects were discussed – i.e., trainings sequence, the number of its contents, the depth in which these were considered, the clarity of the training materials – with concrete suggestions to their adjustment to participants' expectations and needs.

- *Particularly, there are diverse perspectives to be considered about the ES&KW training sequence and contents, following the trainers' and training participants' views about them, from the large number of contents to their sequence and relevance to the trainings outcomes. The most convergent and consistent proposal is that **Key Working specific contents should start to be approached in ES&KW training Day 1**. This points towards the need of rethinking the advantages of having a common first day of training for Key Working and Working in Partnership considering the disadvantages identified by trainers and participants.*
- *In this reflection, the relation between ES&KW training sequence, contents and desired outcomes, where Key Working is central, should be clear to all implicated in the training, including:*
 - those responsible for constructing and developing the training;*
 - trainers who deliver it;*

and training participants - from the first moment they first learn about the course in its dissemination and chose to register, to the training delivery itself.

After the ES&KW training - Participants' voices

- *A follow up mentoring work should also be considered, including continued Reflective Practice and periodical support, **after** the ES&KW training. This is an internationally recommended evidence based practice in favor of training's concrete impact and materialization into professionals' practices. Without it training impact might fade.*
- *Through individual follow up interviews, we observed that ES&KW training had a significant impact in all training participants interviewed, either in a reassuring way ("it felt we were getting that right") or in a transformational way ("it made me have a different train of thought").*

*The extent of this impact seemed to be connected to the participants' knowledge and experience about ES&KW – for participants with more experience and knowledge, this training mostly had a reassuring impact. Because after the ES&KW training some participants' did Training for Trainers (T4T), they were able to compare both trainings, highlighting that since T4T participants had similar level of experience and knowledge to theirs, this allowed them to discuss and reflect upon training contents in a more in-depth, useful and relevant way. We also acknowledge through training observations that having in the same training group participants with none to substantial experience in ES&KW, was, at times, limiting the capacity to expand their knowledge in a more in-depth way. Thus, **it's important to consider and evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of offering the same training to practitioners and parents with large variations in experience and knowledge about ES&KW.***

Early Support principles and Key Working functions throughout Families' voices

Families' interviews highlighted feelings, thoughts and views about their key workers and regarding the impact of Key Working functions on their children's and family lives; families materialized each KW function in concrete life situations and circumstances, evidencing how key workers support, emotionally and practically, their well being and quality of life, meeting their real needs and strengths.

- *When describing their life experience **before** having the Key Working support, families shared a sense of deep uncertainty and lowliness. They stressed how they need professionals - from health, education or social care, and regardless their hierarchical position - to work together, between them and with families, listening and aiming to understand their concrete hopes, strengths and needs.*
- *This underlines the importance of reaching and having multi-agency practitioners in ES&KW training, namely increasing health and social care professionals' participation, to empower a common vision and language based on the Early Support ethos and principles and on Key Working functions.*
- *It is also essential to consider that all the interviewed families had children with complex additional needs, requiring "a high level of support from a wide range of statutory and/or specialist and targeted services, to help them achieve the best possible outcomes" (Early Support, Trainers' guide day 1, 2013), thus particularly*

benefiting from an intense Key Working support, here materialized by their designated key workers or co-key workers.

Although the trainings' learning outcomes are closely connected to the perspective of Key Working as a set of functions, rather than defining it as a (key worker) role, it is important to recognize that Key Working services - namely designated 'key workers', whose job is exclusively confined to Key Working – can be valuable and necessary for children and families requiring a high level of support, even when practitioners are “working to families' strengths and capitalizing on their resilience” (Early Support,2012), which was clearly the case in this research . Thus, in addition to the fundamental perspective that all professionals' should provide children and families' with a Key Working support, each child's, young person and family's concrete needs and strengths should be basis for the decision of the amount of dedication and time needed to support them; consequently non-designated key workers – namely professionals chosen among a team of professionals working with a child with complex needs – must have included in their job description the knowledge, skills, competence and time consigned for this high level of support.

Realizing the vision

Key Working has proven to be crucial for families with children and young people with SEND. Families interviewed in this research once more accentuate it. This evidence underlines the importance of ES&KW training in supporting professionals from all domains and parents to develop and build their understanding of Key Working, namely of the Key Working functions, so they can truly fulfill them.

Early Support's approach to Key Working, which is coherent and consistent with the contemporary conceptual and evidenced based evidence of Special Education and Inclusion and Early Childhood Intervention, underlines the relevance of ES&KW training for professionals and parent carers.

After this initial period of ES&KW training delivery, with positive impact for all participants - even though in different ways (i.e. mostly reassuring or transformational) - the possibility of revisiting it now, considering the identified barriers to Key Working training's successful outcomes, seems central to understand what might have been lost between the trainings intended aims and its delivery, and *why* it occurred. This reflection is also essential for Early Support to reaffirm or adjust the trainings intentions and aims and, accordantly, to review the training's contents and processes, closely monitoring its delivery.

As Marbina, Church and Tayler (2010), we profoundly believe that critical reflection is a unifying practice, including all those involved in a transformational process - such as the one we are now living in the SEND domain - from politicians to those who develop training in this area; from management to practitioners:

Creating a culture of respectful and responsive relationships with children and families can be demanding and requires a system in place that challenges both management and staff to look at everyday practice and reflect critically on it without creating defensiveness or a culture of blame. (p.15)

To realize the ES&KW trainings vision a “Team around the training” is needed; all involved with Key Working - from families to health, social care and education professionals’ and managers - should continue to support the discussion and reflection with those developing the training, in a partnership approach, helping to harmonize the trainings aims and contents with their concrete needs and strengths.

With this research, we hope to have contributed to Early Support’s important intention of, through ES&KW training, coming closer to the vision of having the uniqueness of children, young people and families respected and acknowledged, promoting families well-being and allowing them to have a partnership support approach.

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Appendix 1

Qualitative approach

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretative, material practices that make the world visible . . . qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

Denzin & Lincoln, 2000

Story-telling is at the center of respectful encounters. We must approach one another with genuine curiosity, authentic questions, and attentive listening.

Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2010

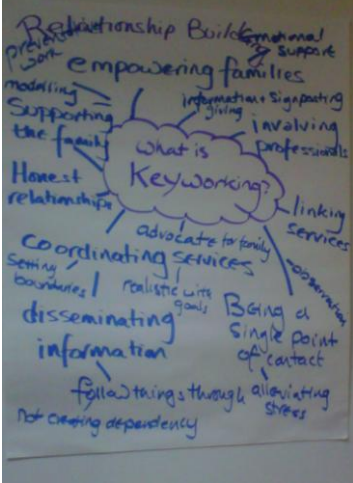
The choice of a qualitative research approach is rooted in philosophical principles that combine, as Denzin and Lincoln (2006, p.34) highlight, beliefs about “ontology (what kind of being is a human being? What is the nature of reality?), epistemology (what is the relation between the inquired and the known?), and methodology (how do we know the world, or gain knowledge of it?).” These beliefs shape the way the researcher sees and acts in the world and form a net combining epistemological, ontological and methodological premises – our interpretative framework or paradigm.

As acknowledged previously (Brito, 2009), the awareness of the complexity that underpins the tensions and dynamics experienced in the contemporary world, makes us see reality as multifaceted, complex, uncertain and unpredictable. We accept this unpredictability as an integral part of who we are and so this research doesn’t intend to eliminate it or isolate it, but aims to understand it. Since the process of science does not occur in a social vacuum, but in an open and plural world, we are near a constructive interpretive paradigm, which assumes the coexistence of multiple views of reality, where researcher and participants construct knowledge together.

This approach is coherent with the Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) and Special Education (SE) conceptual framework – collaborative, person-centred, non-judgmental – and its methods are intentionally related to them.

Appendix 2

Extract from ES&KW training observations

Observation/description	Comments and Inferences
<p>Activity 2.2: What is key working <i>Aims of the activity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To gain an understanding of participants' knowledge and experience of key working • To give the participants the opportunity to think about and share what they have experienced in practice <p>Timings - 20 minutes; Real time – 20 minutes (10h35m – 10h55m)</p> <p>4 new groups (random numbers assigned by trainer)</p> <p>What is KW?</p> <p>Group 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being a single point of contact • Honest relationship + following things through • Creating independency (not dependency) • Boundaries of the relation <p>Group 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowering families • Linking services • Emotional support (but not a friend) <p>Group 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting the family • Involving professionals • Information giving + sign posting • Advocating for the family • Ease stress • Realistic objectives <p>Group 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinating services • Disseminating information • Preventive role • Representing families 	<p>Groups worked very well – participants took turns in talking and listening to each other.</p> <p>Trainer reviews her notes as groups work; it might be important talking to each group during their group work, but it seems difficult to balance the trainings organization/ activities and supporting group discussions...</p> <p>INTERESTING POINT FOR DISCUSSION – INTERVIEW TO TRAINER.</p> <p>Groups share their views about KW in an organized and reflective way; KW functions naturally emerge from their work.</p> <p>VALUING PARTICIPANTS EXPERIENCES AND VIEWS TO REACH CENTRAL TRAINING CONCEPTS</p> <p>Trainer's reinforcement is continuous, valuing participants' views and discussing the meaning they attribute to each element highlighted about KW</p> <p>TRAINER'S CAPACITY TO WORK WITH PARTICIPANTS' IN A PARTICIPANTS' CENTERED AND PARTNERSHIP WAY. MODELING</p> <p>Shadow trainer helped to register participant's ideas; her participation is discreet but at the same time supportive and attentive to the trainer's and training participants' needs – IMPORTANCE OF CO-TRAINER'S ROLE</p> <p>TP4 practitioner Education progressively shares her experience as a parent in a more open way. IMPORTANCE/IMPACT OF LISTENING AND RESPECTING (constant during training)</p>
 <p>Trainer – We've got a great list here! Quite a list going here!</p> <p>Training Participant 4 - I have this experience with my son: every professional thinks he is the only one to work with us that day. You have to know your way as a parent; you have to be persistent; you have to know how to say no – not every parent is ready to do it...</p>	

Appendix 3

Questioning route for Focus Group Discussions

Simple questions do not yield simple answers (...) the simple question is not condescending or childish. It's a sophisticated question that gets to the core of the topic.

Krueger & Casey, 2009

1. Can you tell us a little about yourself - your work and what you most enjoy about it| your experience as a parent.

2. What motivated you to do the Early Support and Key Working training?

3. Think back, before you did the Early Support and Key Working training.

a. What was your view about Key Working?

b. How do you feel about Key Working after the training?

4. What do you hope to achieve in your Key Working role? What impact do you think Key Working will have for children, young people and their families?

5. What are the challenges involved?

6. What was particularly helpful in Early Support and Key Working training:

a. The trainings contents?

b. The process inherent to this training, its training methodology?

c. The training delivery?

d. The training group?

7. Early Support wants Early Support and Key Working training to bring service providers together, with parents, children and young people at the centre of a holistic and integrated planning and intervention process.

Considering these aims, is there anything we missed in our conversation?

Is there anything that you want to say and didn't get a chance to say?

Appendix 4

4a Questioning route - Individual Interviews to Trainers

1. Can you please tell me a little bit about yourself and how you became an ES&KW trainer?
 2. What are, for you, the fundamental cornerstones of this ES&KW training?
 3. What do you think you specifically bring as a trainer, to this ES&KW training approach?
 4. Looking in more detail to the ES and KW training, what is your view about the:
 - Principles that underpin this training?
 - The training's aims and objectives?
 - The training's contents?
 - The process inherent to this training, its training methodology?
 5. How do you perspective the concrete impact of this training on the practitioners' professional development, namely in their confidence to have a Key Working approach?
 6. After observing this particular training session (in this region, with these participants) what concrete challenges and opportunities do you perceive to the implementation of Key Working in this area?
 7. Is there anything we missed in our conversation?
- Is there anything that you want to say and didn't get a chance to say?
-

4b Questioning route - Individual Interviews to Training Participants and Open questionnaire for Pilot training participants

A - Looking back at the Early Support and Key Working training...

1. ... what do you choose as most important things you gained knowledge of? Why?
2. In what ways, if any, has this training changed your practice? Please give specific examples.
3. Looking back at the ES&KW training, what changes do you think need to be made (i.e. considering its structure, contents, training methodologies/process, resources/materials and delivering)?

B – The Key Working functions

ES&KW training presents a definition of Key Working, based on the things that someone providing Key Working support would do - the Key Working functions

Please take a moment to read them...

1. Where do you see ES&KW in action in our organization; in your own practices; in the practices of your co-workers?
2. Can you provide examples of how you offer (or might offer) these functions as part of your work?
3. What are the challenges you might face in fulfilling these Key Working functions?
4. What impact do you think having a Key Working approach will have for children and their families?

C. Recent policy relevant to Key Working

The Department for Education Green Paper on SEND identified and recognized ES&KW as key approaches to meeting the needs of children, young people and families.

The Government's Support and Aspiration Green Paper subsequently gave a commitment to legislate through the Children and Families Bill 2014. Focusing on the elements of the Bill specific to special educational needs (SEN) and disability, the Bill sets out the following changes to the SEN system and approach:

- It extends the SEN system from birth to 25
- It replaces old statements with a new birth- to-25 education, health and care plan (EHCP)
- It offers families personal budgets
- It sets out mechanisms to improve cooperation between all the services that support children and their families, particularly requiring local authorities and health authorities to work together
- It includes the duty on local authorities to set out a 'local offer' of services available to parents and young people.

Thinking about the changes proposed by the Children and Families Bill, consider and reflect on the following:

1. What opportunities and challenges do you identify in these proposals?
2. How can you contribute to ensuring assessment and planning process for children, young people and families are easier to access and work with?

D – Ending questions

Is there anything we missed in our conversation?

Is there anything that you want to say and didn't get a chance to say?

4c Questioning route - Individual Interviews to Families

A - Profile of the child and family

Childs name _____

Name your child likes to be called _____

Age _____

1. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself and your son/daughter?

Things you would like me to know about you and our child...

Things your son/daughter likes | doesn't like...

How does he/she like to communicate? Let you know how he/she is feeling?

2. Who are the important people in your son's/daughter's life?

People in your family, friends...

People working with you now...

3. Your priorities now – what would you like help and support with...

4. Changes/transitions you have gone through/are going through that you would like to share...

5. Other things you would like me to tell me about you and about your family.

B - The key worker and the Key Working functions

1. How long have you known your key worker?

2. What is, for you, a key worker? What does the key worker do?

3. What do you appreciate most about having a Key Working support?

4. How do you think the Key Working support might be improved?

C - Key working training and Key Working Functions

Key Working training is based on the things that someone providing Key Working support should do – the Key Working functions. They are about - Emotional and practical support; Coordination; Planning and assessment; Information and specialist support.

Please take a moment to read them (in attach) and choose some (2 or 3) you find most important.

1. Can you tell me if these Key Working functions are part of your key workers' support to you, your son/daughter and your family?

2. Please give examples (how)

D - Ending questions

1. Is there anything we missed in our conversation? Anything that you want to say and didn't get a chance to say?

Appendix 5

Reflective Practice

Reflective Practice 1

Reflective Practice across disciplines can be seen as a process by which providers actively engage in thinking critically about their own reactions, judgments, behavior, and intentions, integrating that thinking with their actions. In Reflective Practice, this integration can be applied to past interactions, to understand the choices that we made and reactions that we had as practitioners, and so, to plan for future interactions and choices. The integration of thought with emotion and intention can also be applied to reflection occurring during the current relational interaction as it happens, so as to bring about an ever-increasing awareness of our choices; an awareness that is akin to observing one's self from the perspective of another person.

Brazelton Touchpoints Project, 2006

1. What I love most about my job is.... Why?
2. If I could spend more of my time at work doing what I find most rewarding, it would be....
3. My least favorite part of my job is.... Why?
4. One idea I have to make it better taking into account the content³² of the Early Support Key Working in Practice training....
5. Thinking about the Early Support principles and Key Working functions, are there any goals for yourself that you would like to identify and implement?

Reflective Practice 2

When a practitioner reflects in and on his practice, the possible objects of his reflection are as varied as the kinds of phenomena before him and the systems of knowing-in-practice that he brings to them. He may reflect on the tacit norms and appreciations that underlie a judgment, or on the strategies and theories implicit in a pattern of behaviour. He may reflect on the feeling for a situation that has led him to adopt a particular course of action, on the way in which he has framed the problem he is trying to solve, or on the role he has constructed for himself within a larger institutional context.

Schön, 1983

1. What do you see as the two most important goals for your work with families?
 - a.
 - b.
2. Identify two of your greatest strengths in working with families:
 - a.
 - b.

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Day one

The Early Support principles that underpin the training
The aims and process of helping
Different views of the world
Working in partnership
Working together to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families

Day two

Early Support and key working
Key working functions
Key working in times of transition and change
Multi-agency meetings and what will 'getting it right' look like?
Management and supervision considerations

3. Identify two of your greatest challenges in working with families:

- a.
- b.

4. Please revisit the **Early Support principles** that underpin the Key Working functions:

1. The uniqueness of children, young people and families is valued and provided for.	6. Children, young people and families are able to make informed choices.
2. A single multi-agency assessment, planning and review process is provided and delivered in partnership with children, young people and families, facilitated by key working support where appropriate.	7. Wherever possible, families, children and young people are able to live 'ordinary lives'.
3. Service delivery is holistic, coordinated and seamless.	8. Children, young people and families are involved in shaping, developing and evaluating the services they use.
4. Continuity of care is maintained through different stages of a child's life and through their preparation for adulthood.	9. Multi-agency working practices and systems are integrated.
5. Children and young people's learning and development is monitored and promoted.	10. Children, young people and families can be confident that the people working with them have appropriate training, skills, knowledge and experience.

What Early Support Principle(s) do you consider more closely linked to:

4.1. The two most important goals for your work with families

- a)
- b)

4.2 Two of your greatest strengths in working with families

- a)
- b)

4.3 Two of your greatest challenges in working with families

- a)
- b)

Reflective Practice 3

Creating a culture of respectful and responsive relationships with children and families can be demanding and requires a system in place that challenges both management and staff to look at everyday practice and reflect critically on it without creating defensiveness or a culture of blame.

Reflection and critical reflection are unifying practices for diverse groups of professionals

Marbina, Church & Tayler, 2010

1. What do you see as the two most important goals for your work with other **practitioners**?

- a.
- b.

2. Identify two of your greatest strengths in working with other **practitioners**:

- a.
- b.

3. Identify two of your greatest challenges in working other **practitioners**:

- a.
- b.

Looking back at the Key Working Training, what 'tools' would you choose to face those challenges and overcome barriers?

Day one

The Early Support principles that underpin the training
The aims and process of helping
Different views of the world
Working in partnership
Working together to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families

Day two

Early Support and key working
Key working functions
Key working in times of transition and change
Multi-agency meetings and what will 'getting it right' look like?
Management and supervision considerations

Reflective Practice 4

[Reflective practice is] a deliberate pause to assume an open perspective, to allow for higher level thinking processes. Practitioners use these processes for examining beliefs, goals, and practices (...).
York-Barr, Sommers, Ghere, & Montie, 2001

A. Please choose one (or more) Key Working function(s)³³ that you have put into practice with a family and reflect upon it:

- **Key Working function(s):**

1. Briefly describe the family (parent/family factors – priorities, needs, strengths; family dynamics; child factors – condition, needs, interests; environmental factors; ...)

2. How did the family respond to the Key Working function(s) that you have put in practice?

3. What meaning did you make of this?

³³ A. Being a single point of regular and consistent contact for the child, young person and family
B. Providing information and signposting where necessary
C. Identifying the strengths and needs of all family members
D. Advocating on the child's, young person's and/or family's behalf where appropriate
E. Providing emotional and practical support as required, as part of a trusting relationship
F. Coordinating services and practitioners around the child, young person and family
G. Facilitating multi-agency meetings
H. Supporting a single planning and joint assessment process
I. Enabling and empowering the child, young person and their family to make decisions and use their personalised budgets in a way that is most effective for them
J. Facilitating clinical care seamlessly integrated with specialist and universal services, where appropriate

Reflective Practice 5

Key working support provides a navigator, an enabler, a coordinator. The overall aim of key working is to ensure the provision of holistic care and support to meet the individual requirements and aspirations of the child, young person and their family. (...) The individual offering key working support should strive for an open and supportive relationship with the child/young person and their family, and this should be developed through regular and proactive contact.

Key working: improving outcomes for all, 2012

Looking back at the Early Support and Key Working training...

1. Has this training changed anything about your practice?

How? Please give specific examples.

2. Where do you see Early Support and Key Working in action in our organization; in your own practices; in the practices of your co-workers?

3. What changes do you think need to be made to the Key Working training (i.e. considering its structure, contents, training methodologies/process, resources/materials and delivering)?

Appendix 6

Training Participants data - ES&KW training deliveries observed:

Training 1 | 13 training participants

Training 2 | 12 training participants

Training 3 | 8 training participants

Total – Training 1, 2 and 3 | 33 training participants

	Training 1 (T1)	Training 2 (T2)	Training 3 (T3)	Total
Participants	11	12	8	N=33

Sex	T1	T2	T3	Total
Female	11	12	8	31
Male	2	0	0	2

N=33

Applying as ...	T1	T2	T3	Total
Parent	1	1		2
Parent Professional	1			1
Professional	11	11	8	30

N=33

Working in...	T1	T2	T3	Total
Mainstream	6	8	7	21
Special school	7	4	1	12

N=33

Heard about Early Support...	T1	T2	T3	Total
At work / Through work	2	1	1	4
Colleagues	1	1	2	4
Email/Internet/Eventbrite/Website	3	4	1	8
Employer/Manager/Team Manager	6	2		8
Early Support Coordinator/Service		4		4
Regional Facilitator		1		1
Use Early Support materials			4	4

N=33

Experience in being involved in ES&KW	T1	T2	T3	Total
Little	2		1	3
None	1		1	2
Some	4	6	4	14
Substantial	6	6	2	14

N=33

Ethnicity	T1	T2	T3	Total
Asian/Asian British – Indian	1			1
Black/Black British – African	2			2
Black/Black British – Caribbean	2	3		5
Black/Black British – Other	1			1
Mixed - White & Black Caribbean	1			1
White – British	4	7	8	19
White – Other	2	2		4

N=33

Education	T1	T2	T3	Total
Further education	4	4	8	16
Higher education	9	8	0	17

N=33

Job field	T1	T2	T3	Total
Education or the community	3	3	8	14
Health Education or the community	1	1		2
Health Social care	1	1		2
Health Social care Education or the community	1	1		2
Independent or private sector	1	1		2
Social care	2	2		4
Voluntary	3	3		6

N=33

Years of experience working or living with a child or young person with additional needs or disability	T1	T2	T3	Total
Not applicable	1	1		2
None		1		1
1 to 5	5	3	1	9
6 to 10	1	2	1	4
11 to 15	3	2	3	8
16 to 20	2	2		4
21 to 25	1	1	3	5

N=33

Families members where there is a disabled child or young person in the family, please state your relation to the child/young person	T1	T2	T3	Total
Biological parent	2	1	1	4
Others	1 Grandparent	1 Nephews		2
Not applicable, I am applying as a professional	10	10	7	27

N=33

Age	T1	T2	T3	Total
21 – 30	2	3		5
31 – 40	1	6	2	9
40 +	10	3	6	19

N=33

Job title	T1	T2	T3	Total
Children's Centre Lead Officer		1		1
Community Support Work		1		1
Counsellor		1		1
Deputy manager		1		1
Early Support Coordinator		2		2
Early Support Key worker	1	1		2
Early Support Team Development worker			1	1
Early Support Worker	4			4
Early Years Early Intervention Practitioner	1			1
IFSS Support Worker		2		2
Key worker	1			1
Key worker Coordinator	1			1
Manager	1			1
Parent	1			1
Project Worker		1		1
SEN Development Worker			1	1
SEN Early Years Development Worker			3	3
SEN Family Worker and Early Communication			1	1
SENCO Childcare practitioner			2	2
SEND Development Officer	1			1
Social Worker/ Trainee Social Worker	2			2
Team Leader Clinical Specialist Children's OT		1		1
Young Carers Schools Worker		1		1

N=33




Company	T1	T2	T3	Total
Charities	3	1		4
Children's Centres	1		1	2
Councils /Boroughs	6	5	3	14
Disabled Children's Team	1			1
Early Support Team			2	2
Health Services/hospital	1	1		2
Learning Difficulties and Disabilities Service		1		1
Nursery/Child care	1	1	2	4
Other	2	1		3

N=33

Appendix 7

Consent forms for trainers, training participants and families

Consent form for trainers

 <p>CEDAR</p>	 <p>Early Support for children, young people and families</p>	 <p>THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK</p>
<p>Participant identification number where applicable</p>		
<p>CONSENT FORM FOR TRAINERS</p>		
<p>Project Title:</p>	Understanding the initial impact of Early Support and Key Working training through the voices of providers and families	
<p>Name of Researcher:</p>	Dr Ana Teresa Brito	
<p>I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet dated 6 February 2013 on Information Sheet for the above project which I may keep for my records and have had the opportunity to ask any questions I may have.</p>	<p>Signed:</p>	
<p>I agree to take part in the above study and am willing to:</p>		
Be interviewed and have my interview recorded <i>(Please tick one box.)</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Be quoted in reports and publications maintaining anonymity <i>(Please tick one box.)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>I understand that my information will be held and processed for the following purposes:</p>		
Research report to Early Support/National Children's Bureau regarding the initial impact of Early Support and Key Working training.		
Reports and anonymised findings at conferences and in journal articles so that other people can learn about the Early Support and Key Working Training, in the context of the post-doctoral study.		
<p>I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.</p>		
_____ Name of Participant	_____ Date	_____ Signature
_____ Researcher	_____ Date	_____ Signature
<small>HSSREC/Consent/Information Template/2011-12 v 2.2.</small>		



Early Support
for children, young people and families

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WARWICK

Information Sheet for trainers

Study title: Understanding the initial impact of Early Support and Key Working training through the voices of providers and families.

Investigator: Dr Ana Teresa Brito

Background and purpose: You are being asked to take part in an independent research conducted by Dr Ana Teresa Brito Associate Fellow in CEDAR, University of Warwick. The purpose of this research is to analyse the specific contents, processes and delivery of Early Support and Key Working training and understand its initial impact on training participants – providers from Health, Social Services, Education, Voluntary Sectors and parent carers - and on families they work with.

Although the present study concerns this specific training approach it is included in a wider post-doctoral investigation. The post-doc research aims to establish Recommended Practices for high quality training and personnel preparation in Early Childhood Intervention.

Thus, this study involves Early Support and Key Working trainers, training participants (multiagency practitioners and parent carers who attended this training) and families of children or young people they work with.

Several Early Support and Key Working training events will be observed, followed by three different stages, involving diverse participants and procedures:

- Immediately after the Early Support and Key Working training takes place, interviews with trainers and training participants will be carried out to discuss the impact of this training in building a Key Working approach.
- The 2nd stage will track the impact of the Early Support and Key Working training on the training participants work routines with other professionals and families.
- The 3rd stage includes interviewing families working with the training participants, with the aim of understanding the impact of Key Working on their lives and on the lives of their children.

What will I be asked to do?

After Early Support and Key Working training takes place, I will interview you in relation to Early Support and Key Working training contents, processes and about the training delivered; if possible, this interview will be conducted in the same facilities where the training took place.

I expect the interview will take no longer than one hour. With your permission, I will audiotape the interview solely for the purposes of accurately transcribing the conversation. The audiotapes, as well as the transcriptions will be stored securely at the University Warwick in a safe, locked cabinet.

Confidentiality

All information you give will be treated as confidential and your anonymity will be at all times respected and protected. Pseudonyms will be used to protect your privacy and confidentiality. Quotes can be used in reports and publications, always maintaining anonymity, with your authorization.



Early Support
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Your involvement is voluntary

Please know that you do not have to answer any questions or discuss any topics that you feel uncomfortable with. You are free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

What are the benefits?

There are no direct benefits to you. However, your participation is important since it will contribute to a greater awareness of how Early Support and Key Working training concrete impacts on providers, families and children and young people.

A summary of the research results will be available.

Request for more information: You may ask additional questions about the study at any time. Please contact Ana Teresa Brito at a.t.brito@warwick.ac.uk or by calling 07761661769.


Should anyone have any complaints relating to a study conducted at the University or by University's employees or students, the complainant is advised to contact the Deputy Registrar at the following address:


The Deputy Registrar
Deputy Registrar's Office
University of Warwick
Coventry CV4 8UW
Tel: (024) 7652 2785

Further information about the complaints procedure is available at:
http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/rss/researchgovernance/complaints_procedure/


6 February 2013

Consent form for training participants





Early Support
for children, young people and families



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WARWICK

Participant identification number where applicable

CONSENT FORM FOR TRAINING PARTICIPANTS

Project Title: Understanding the initial impact of Early Support and Key working training through the voices of providers and families

Name of Researcher: Dr Ana Teresa Brito

I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet dated 6th February 2013 On Information Sheet for the above project which I may keep for my records and have had the opportunity to ask any questions I may have.

I agree to take part in the above study and am willing to:

	Yes	No
Participate in a Focus Group and have it recorded <i>(Please tick one box.)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Be interviewed in my workplace <i>(Please tick one box.)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accept the researcher's presence as an observer, while I am working with other professionals and/or families <i>(Please tick one box.)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keep a reflective diary and sharing it for research purposes <i>(Please tick one box.)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Invite families I work with using a Key Working approach to be interviewed in relation to the impact of Key Working in their family life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Be quoted in reports and publications maintaining anonymity <i>(Please tick one box.)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I understand that my information will be held and processed for the following purposes:

- Research report to Early Support/National Children's Bureau regarding the initial impact of Early Support and Key Working training.
- Anonymised findings at conferences and in journal articles so that other people can learn about the Early Support and Key Working Training, in the context of the post-doctoral study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

<hr style="border: none; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> Name of Participant	<hr style="border: none; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> Date	<hr style="border: none; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> Signature
<hr style="border: none; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> Researcher	<hr style="border: none; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> Date	<hr style="border: none; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> Signature

HSSREC/Consent/Information Template/2011-12 v 2.2.



Early Support
for children, young people and families

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WARWICK

Information Sheet for training participants

Study title: Understanding the initial impact of Early Support and Key working training through the voices of providers and families.

Investigator: Dr Ana Teresa Brito

Background and purpose: You are being asked to take part in an independent research, conducted by Ana Teresa Brito Associate Fellow in CEDAR, University of Warwick. The purpose of this research is to analyse the specific contents, processes and delivery of Early Support and Key Working training and understand its initial impact on training participants – providers from Health, Social Services, Education, Voluntary Sectors and parent carers - and on families they work with. Although the present study concerns this specific training approach, it is included, in a wider post-doctoral investigation. The post-doc research aims to establish Recommended Practices for high quality training and personnel preparation in Early Childhood Intervention.

Thus, this study involves Early Support and Key Working trainers, training participants (multiagency practitioners and parent carers who attended this training) and families of children or young people they work with.

Several Early Support and Key working training events will be observed, followed by three different stages, involving diverse participants and procedures.

- The first stage of the research focuses on the impact of training in building a Key Working approach.
- The second stage will track the impact of the Early Support and Key Working training on the training participants work routines with other professionals and families.
- The third stage includes interviewing families working with the training participants, with the aim of understanding the impact of key working on their lives and on the lives of their children.

What will I be asked to do?

As a training participant, you will be asked to take part in a **focus group discussion** immediately after the training is concluded, if possible in the same facilities where the training took place. The focus of this group discussion will relate to the first impact of Early Support and Key Working training. It will have no more than five training participants and is expected to take no longer than 90 minutes.

With your permission, I will audiotape the focus group discussion solely for the purposes of accurately transcribing the conversation.

On the second stage of the research, two to three months *after* the training took place I will ask you to **accept my presence as an observer, while you are working with a family and/or other professionals**. After that observation, I will **interview** you at your place of work, focusing on Key working and its impact on your daily routines with other professionals and families. I expect this interview to take no longer than an hour.



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The observation and interview will be scheduled according to your preference. An authorization will be asked from your employers considering the observation and interview will occur during their working hours (clearly explaining the purpose, aims and design of the research). Professionals and families should be requested in advance for their agreement regarding the researcher's presence (see *Observation - Informed consent for families* and *Observation - Informed consent for professionals*).

You will also be invited to share your thoughts about Early Support and Key Working training and its impact through a continuous **reflective practice exercise** (Journal writing), with simple questions addressing your daily routines with other professionals and families. You will be asked to write on a weekly basis for a period of two months.

I will also ask you to invite families you work with using a Key Working approach to be interviewed in relation to the impact of Key Working on their lives and on the lives of their children.

Confidentiality

All information you give will be treated as confidential and your anonymity will be at all times respected and protected. Pseudonyms will be used to protect your privacy and confidentiality. Quotes will only be used with your authorization and always maintaining anonymity. The audiotapes, as well as the transcriptions will be stored securely at the University Warwick in a safe, locked cabinet.

Your involvement is voluntary

Please know that you do not have to answer any questions or discuss any topics that you feel uncomfortable with. You are free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

What are the benefits?

There are no direct benefits to you. However, your participation is important since it will contribute to a greater awareness of Early Support and Key working training concrete impact on providers, families and children and young people.

Although the present research concerns this specific training approach, it is part of a wider post-doctoral investigation that aims to establish Recommended Practices for high quality training in Early Intervention.

A summary of the research results will be available.

Request for more information: You may ask additional questions about the study at any time. Please contact Ana Teresa Brito at a.t.brito@warwick.ac.uk or by calling 07761661769.

Should anyone have any complaints relating to a study conducted at the University or by University's employees or students, the complainant is advised to contact the Deputy Registrar at the following address:

The Deputy Registrar
Deputy Registrar's Office
University of Warwick
Coventry CV4 8UW
Tel: (024) 7652 2785

Further information about the complaints procedure is available at: http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/rss/researchgovernance/complaints_procedure/

6th February 2013

Consent form for Families



Participant identification number where applicable

CONSENT FORM FOR FAMILIES

Project Title: Understanding the initial impact of Early Support and Key working training through the voices of providers and families

Name of Researcher: Dr Ana Teresa Brito

I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet dated 6th February 2013 on Information Sheet

for the above project which I may keep for my records and have had the opportunity to ask any questions I may have.

I agree to take part in the above study and am willing to:

	Yes	No
Be interviewed and have my interview recorded <i>(Please tick one box.)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Be quoted in reports and publications maintaining anonymity <i>(Please tick one box.)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I understand that my information will be held and processed for the following purposes:

Research report to Early Support/National Children's Bureau regarding the initial impact of Early Support and Key Working training.

Anonymised findings at conferences and in journal articles so that other people can learn about the Early Support and Key Working Training, in the context of the post-doctoral study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

Name of Participant Date Signatur

Researcher Date Signature



Information Sheet for families – parents/carers

Study title: Understanding the initial impact of Early Support and Key working training through the voices of providers and families.

Investigator: Dr Ana Teresa Brito

Back ground and purpose: You are being asked to take part in an independent research conducted by Dr Ana Teresa Brito Associate Fellow in CEDAR, University of Warwick. The purpose of this research is to understand the initial impact of Early Support and Key Working training on training participants – providers from Health, Social Services, Education, Voluntary Sectors and parent carers - and on families they work with.

We are requesting your participation because your key worker was a training participant at Early Support and Key Working training and we are trying to understand the training impact on the his/her way of working with children, families and other professionals.

Although the present study concerns this specific training approach, it is included in a wider post-doctoral investigation. The post-doc research aims to establish Recommended Practices for high quality training and personnel preparation in Early Childhood Intervention.

What will I be asked to do?

I will interview you in relation to Early Support and Key Working considering how it has impacted on your family life – what you value about this approach and how it might be improved.

The date and place of the interview will be scheduled according to your preference. It can be held in a community location, in your home or other place more suitable for you, at the most convenient time.

I expect interviews will take no longer than one hour. With your permission, I will audiotape the interview solely for the purposes of accurately writing down the conversation.

Confidentiality

All information you give will not be disclosed and your anonymity will be at all times respected and protected. A made up name will be used to protect your privacy and confidentiality. Quotes will only be used with your authorization and always maintaining anonymity. The audiotapes, as well as the transcriptions will be stored securely at the University Warwick in a safe, locked cabinet.

Your involvement is voluntary

Please know that you do not have to answer any questions or discuss any topics that you feel uncomfortable with. You are free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.



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What are the benefits?

There are no direct benefits to you. However, your participation is important since it will contribute to a greater awareness of Early Support and Key working training concrete impact on the lives of families, children and young people. A summary of the research results will be available.

What qualified personnel will be available to deal with possible adverse consequences to participating in this research?

Considering the research aims, it not likely that adverse consequences occur. Nevertheless if they do happen, Professor Geoff Lindsay, a chartered educational psychologist internationally recognised for his work on ethics, will mentor and support the principal investigator in the context of this research.

Request for more information: You may ask additional questions about the study at any time. Please contact Ana Teresa Brito at a.t.brito@warwick.ac.uk or by calling 07761661769.

Should anyone have any complaints relating to a study conducted at the University or by University's employees or students, the complainant is advised to contact the Deputy Registrar at the following address:

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6th February 2013

Appendix 8

Anna and Mary's family

When social workers started coming in (...) they decided we didn't need help because we said we didn't want respite, as they call it. [For us] it's not about sending the children away to somewhere else where someone could look after them (...) I said: "It's not what I need; what I need is for someone to come and help in our house." And they said "No, they don't do that, they don't do house work", as they sit there watching two grown up women in pieces and walked out the door.

Then Carol got it all sort for me! We got the direct payments through and that's when Sarah [came to help the family in their home]. She comes and, literally, is like a second mum to them all (...) She understands when they're not well and she's the other pair of hands to pick them up, when you can't pick them all up. Our respite, for us, is having Sarah (...) because that's what it's about - you're not upsetting anybody, the kids are in the same environment; she knows them, they know her, they trust her completely. If you've got that person that you do know and trust, it makes life so much easier... she's a second me; she comes through the door all the children, their eyes light up!

[Both key workers] they've enabled me to do my job, they've enabled me to keep my identity and my job; they enabled me to do that and not worry in work; they've been very good when they take all that pressure of me... I just find it a lot less stressful now; it's stressful when they're ill, but when their ill now I don't have to worry because Sara is here, and don't have panic...

Carol understands where we're all coming from she knows the family dynamic, everybody; she understood about the respite. It's about listening to what we want, not what other people want, what they think we need. There's a lot of people out there that literally need to learn... people don't understand that they need to know that those are *their* truth and *their* values, because what *they* feel is right or wrong is not necessarily what other people feel... and it's not their business - they should not dictate to me what they feel should happen. (FIGM, Anna and Mary's family – TP2a)

John's family

What I like about Carol is [that] she is very efficient, for those paper people... sometimes paper is more important than people... but Carol she's brilliant! (...) I think it's so interesting how she deals with it. We had this multidisciplinary meeting... it's nice, many ladies, cup of tea, biscuits, they chat and chat and chat, and it's easy to lose [the purpose but] she's there quietly writing, writing, writing... amazing how quickly she catches everything! Eventually, when someone is saying something, she's writing. And nearly when we are finishing our meeting, she will say – "So we do that..." and because it's written she will point out what you promised for this meeting, what you promised for next meeting, what in between you will do for the next three months. So everybody needs to do something (...).

When we come back again, she will start the next meeting [by asking] if something was hanging from last meeting, if everything was done, which is, I think, brilliant and she doesn't do it in a very sort of standoff, official way - we sit in almost sort of in a round table, around a coffee table... but at the same time she knows this balance... So it's a very easy going meeting, very relaxing, and at the same time it's all fixed on the paper. When she finishes the meeting, she quickly sends the resume to others, of other disciplines. I didn't realize that there is [training] I just thought it's her personality... how she deals with it. But if it's training it's great! All [should] be like that. (FI, John's family – TP2a)
