



# Brief Practice Guides: The Plymouth Practice Framework

## Why do we need a Practice Framework?

Assessing the needs and risks being experienced by children, young people and their families requires a systematic approach, that uses the same framework and conceptual map for gathering and analysing information. This supports consistency in our practice approach and a shared understanding amongst managers, practitioners, multi-agency partners and families of the outcomes that need to be achieved.

The Plymouth Practice Framework builds on all aspects of practice that we know to be useful when assessing, implementing and evaluating what we do. It is based on findings from a wide range of practice approaches and does not necessarily represent anything new or unknown. Rather it is a bringing together of best practice principles into a unified framework, which supports us to working restoratively with both families and colleagues.

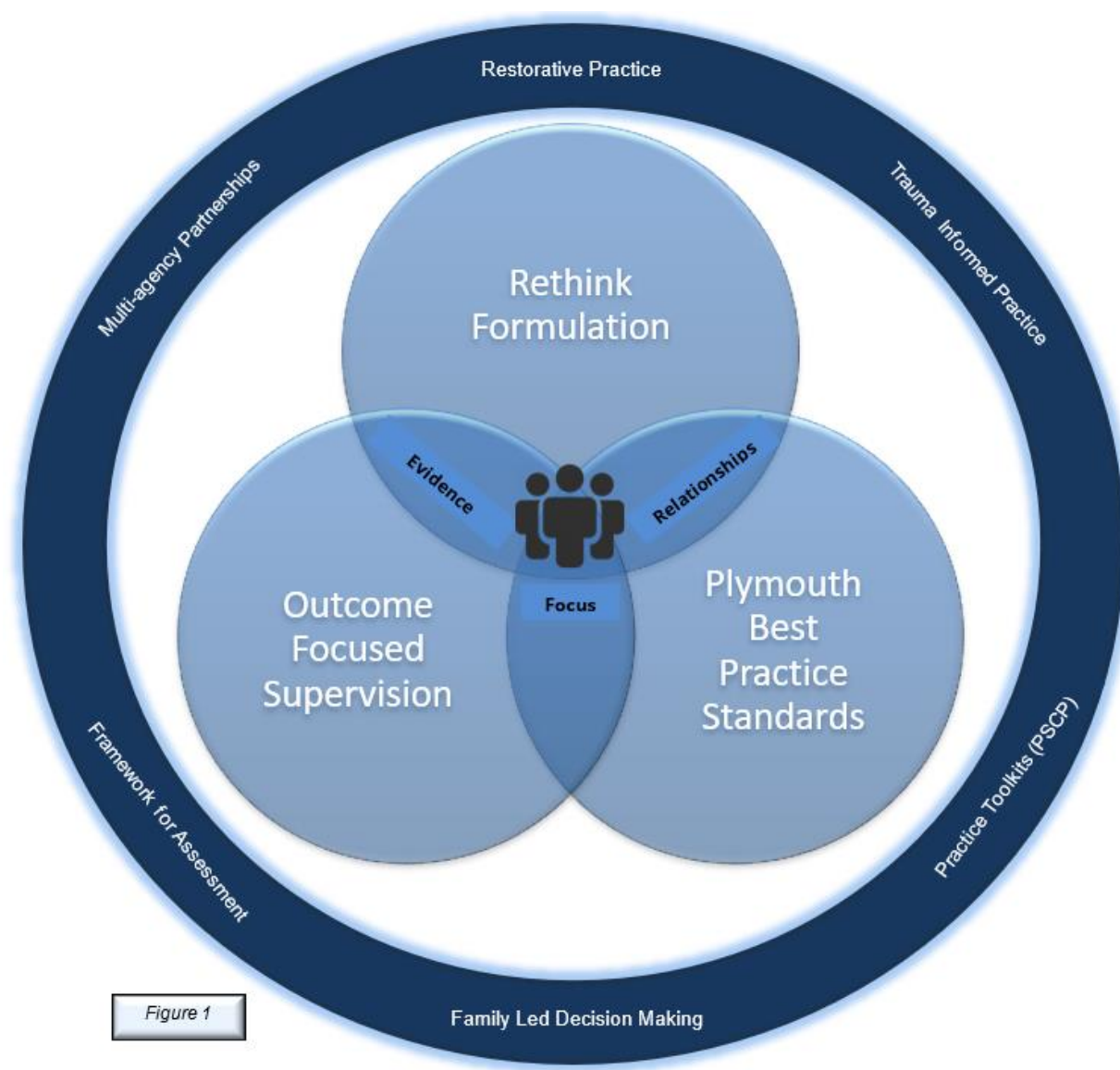
## What is the Plymouth Practice Framework?

The Plymouth Practice Framework (Figure 1) contains three central elements:

- Rethink Formulation,
- Plymouth Best Practice Standards
- Outcome Focused Supervision.

The framework places the family at the central point of convergence of these three elements; each element is complementary and necessary to the other, and in turn they place emphasis on creating effective relationships, staying focused and using evidence-based approaches. If all the elements are in place, then we are creating conditions that are much more likely to provide meaningful and effective help, support and care whilst also fully utilising the family's strengths and skills in the creation, implementation and evaluation of plans. This will enable us to truly work with families in a restorative and trauma informed way. The Plymouth Practice Framework is applicable to providing any service for children, young people and their families, at any level of intervention.

To support delivery of the three central elements, the Plymouth Practice Framework incorporates some key practice principles and approaches. When these are embedded in our practice, families are more likely to receive a supportive, caring and partnership-based response from the professionals working with them and are consequently more likely to achieve sustainable change.



### Rethink Formulation process

A unified approach to help us to make sense of things; to develop a shared language; to analyse deeper; to bring together multiple perspectives; and to develop outcome focused plans.

### Outcome focused supervision

Maintaining a consistent and sharp focus on the outcomes which need to be realised for families seeks to avoid drift and delay in supporting meaningful and positive change.

Outcome focused supervision plays a primary role in facilitating Rethink Formulation by helping to support hypothesis formation, facilitating the prioritisation of perpetuating factors (4Ps), enabling coherent outcome-focused planning and identifying the 'next steps, and by promoting cyclical evaluation of the change being achieved.

### Plymouth Best Practice Standards

Our Best Practice Standards serve to ensure that children and families are central to everything we do. Working with our partners, they support a common aim to be restorative, and trauma informed in our responses to the families we work with.

### Family-led decision making

Shifting the balance of power from professional led decisions about children and families by identifying opportunities to maximise the involvement of families in decision making across all of our involvement. A strength-focused, systemic way of working that empowers families and leads to sustainable change.

### Multi-agency partnerships

A thorough and integrated practice approach that involves shared systems, processes and ways of working, which utilises all means, agencies and colleagues available to us when working with families and each other.

### Restorative practice

Restorative practice is a term used to describe a way of being, an underpinning ethos, which enables us to build and maintain healthy relationships, resolve difficulties and repair harm when relationships break down. It embodies a set of core beliefs and principles that proactively promote building relationships, partnership and shared accountability. The underlying premise of Restorative Practice rests with the belief that people will make positive changes when those in positions of authority do things WITH them rather than TO them or FOR them.

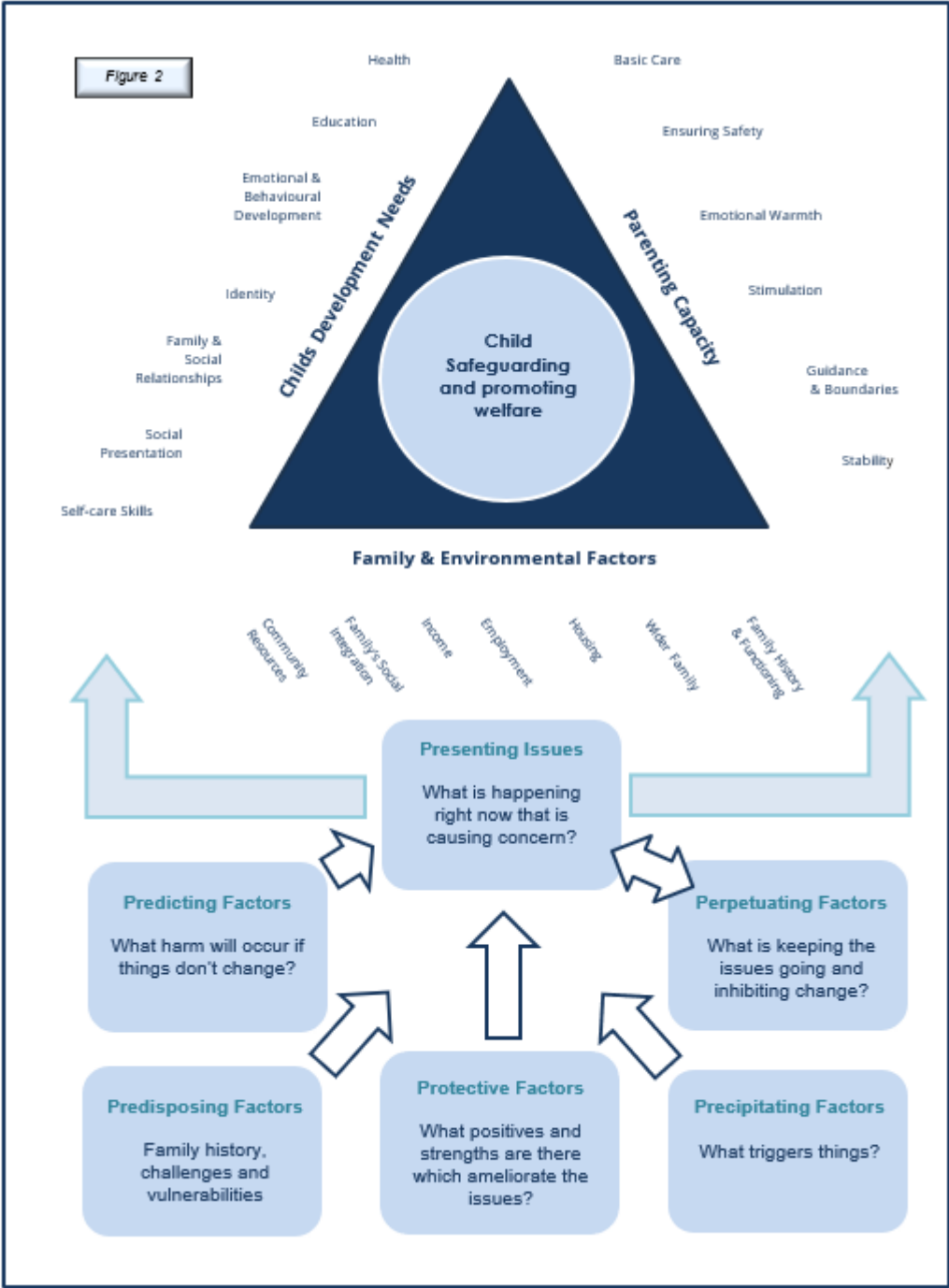
### Trauma-informed practice

Trauma-informed practice is a compassionate, sensitive, and empathetic approach to our work. It is grounded in the recognition and understanding that trauma can have a wide and lasting impact on an individual's development. This includes their ability to feel safe and develop trusting relationships with others. This approach acknowledges the importance of looking beyond an individual's presenting behaviours. Instead of asking, "What is wrong with this person?" we ask, "What has happened to this person, and what do they need?"

### Framework for Assessment and Practice Toolkits

The 'Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families' ([Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#)) provides an integral ecological framework to support the consideration of a child's developmental needs; the parenting capacity of parents or caregivers to respond appropriately to those needs, including their capacity to keep the

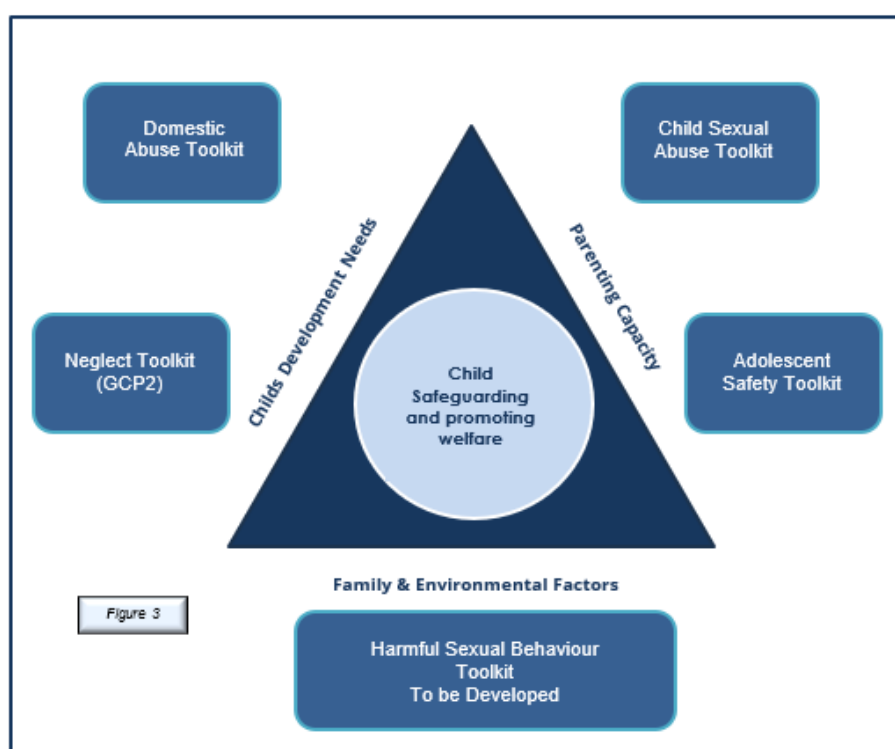
child safe from harm; and the impact of wider family and environmental factors, including their influence on parenting capacity and the child's development.



The Framework for Assessment should be used to support a clear identification and articulation of the 'Presenting Issues' that are a cause for concern. Clarity of presenting issues and the associated 'Predicting Factors' provides an essential foundation for effective Rethink Formulation (Figure 5).

Effective planning and decision making need to be led by evidenced based assessment of what the family is experiencing. In order to support a deeper understanding of the lived experience of children, young people and their families in respect of certain social issues, more specialist assessment tools may be needed to support effective Rethink Formulation and outcome focused planning.

Plymouth children's services and the Plymouth Safeguarding Childrens Partnership (PSCP) have sanctioned the use of a range of specific assessment toolkits to support a more detailed understanding of need and risk in specific circumstances and against the domains of the Framework for Assessment.



The Plymouth Practice Framework promotes effective multi-agency collaboration and supportive relationships between professionals and families. This approach enhances engagement and leads to strength-focused, tailored plans and interventions. As a result, outcomes are more sustainable, reducing the need for repeated service involvement.