



FAMILY JUSTICE QUALITY CIRCLE

INFORMATION

Quality Circle is an initiative by social workers and lawyers in Sussex who have created a self-regulating group of practitioners with the aim of identifying the most effective or promising practices and bringing about beneficial change in every aspect of the family justice system in Sussex.

The focus is on legal proceedings concerning children and is multi-disciplinary i.e., it is open to social workers, solicitors, barristers, legal executives, academics, LA lawyers, psychologists, psychiatrists, Cafcass, ISWs and the Police. The meetings are usually attended by some local Judges also.

Those participating in Quality Circle are committed to sharing their knowledge and ensuring that relevant research, guidance and policy initiatives are disseminated widely. The work of the group is action orientated.

The group met first in November 2017 and has met every other month since then. The group has covered subjects such as: “trauma-informed practice”, “the voice of the child” and domestic abuse. A good example of the group’s approach have been sessions on “Creating a Culture of Respect” inspired by an article by “Surviving Safeguarding” about how alienating many families feel Court can be. The outcome was a manifesto which was approved and adopted by the Sussex Family Justice Board and published by Nuffield Family Justice Observatory with whom we work closely. This “Culture of Respect” document lays out our guiding principles of respect, equality and inclusion.

Meetings

Meetings take place every other month. People’s time is at a premium and so the duration is generally about 75 minutes. In normal times, seating is in the round to promote discussion – since the pandemic we have moved the meetings online.

Contributions from newly qualified practitioners are particularly welcome. Participants are encouraged to identify practical examples of improvements to practice with a view to these being discussed/adopted/modified in the discussion and actioned through the Sussex Family Justice Board. Written material is disseminated regularly to the mailing list (of nearly 900 practitioners). To join our list (or be removed) email: james.hart@1cor.com

Our work is complemented by our Parent and Young Person Panel made up of people who have experienced the family justice system as young people or parents.

Volunteers

The Quality Circle welcomes volunteers to help its work and provide suggestions for subjects that should be explored/research that should be disseminated.

Nicola McGeown & Martin Downs