



Building Better Futures

DSC, through the Early Intervention Transformation Programme is working to ensure we make good decisions for some of our most vulnerable children.

The 'Building Better Futures' project aims to improve children's outcomes by providing an evidence based model of social work assessment followed by targeted and effective interventions for children and families who have reached the threshold for the involvement of Trust Social Services Family Support Teams.

The need to strengthen social worker assessments and targeted interventions has been highlighted from a range of sources.

This Project seeks to address this need for assessments and reports to be evidence based and clear in their arguments. The quality of the assessment of children in need and subsequent intervention have a significant impact on outcomes for the children concerned. Good assessment and intervention contribute to better outcomes and understanding what makes for a good assessment is vital. Even with long-standing support from social workers and other agencies, some parents are unable to protect their children from harm. In cases where there is clear evidence of significant harm or its likelihood, multiple risk factors that are known to be associated with future harm.

Building Better Futures (BBF) aims to improve children's outcomes by developing and disseminating a regional model of parenting capacity assessment and intervention. The model for BBF has been developed in Northern Ireland by Professor Emeritus Stan Houston and Dr. Lorna Montgomery QUB and is based on his work over a seven year period completed with the support of some social workers who tested it in practice. The model has been developed published and peer reviewed and is based on the McMasters Model of family assessment. The aim is to maximise the

effectiveness of assessment and intervention and thereby improve outcomes for children.

With the DSC investment It is anticipated the model will be further developed and refined with the active involvement of Trust social work staff to ensure that it is fit for purpose and useful and accessible to social workers in busy social work teams. With the on-going involvement and support from Professor Houston and Dr. Lorna Montgomery the model will be further evaluated and refined. For a small number of children who cannot be safely supported at home this assessment will highlight this earlier in the process, enabling social services and other professionals to intervene early and to seek wider family support or a care placement.