

Safeguarding is Everyone's Responsibility

What is Rethink Formulation?

When working with children, young people and families, formulation refers to the way we understand their needs and experiences and how we use that to inform our practice. In Newcastle, as part of our Innovations and Partner in Practice Programme we have established our own formulation model, 'Rethink Formulation', often referred to across the city as the 6Ps (you can find this on the next page). Rethink Formulation is one of five aspects of the Newcastle Practice Model that embody our values and expectations of practice to enable us to provide consistently high-quality help, support and care. A similar tool is identified in the Safeguarding Children Assessment and Analysis Framework (SAAF) as a means of analysis within child and family assessments.

Why have we established Rethink Formulation?

We have found that when working with families, services get into a pattern of assessments and short-term interventions that end when there have been improvements. However, families often need help again. If we can understand better why previous interventions didn't sustain positive change, we can avoid trying similar interventions again, which can result in the risk of families disengaging if these don't work.

We want to try a new way of thinking, giving practitioners the time, space and tools to thoroughly and robustly work with families to analyse the information we already have about their circumstances, and to focus on addressing the presenting issues, rather than past ones.

Rethink Formulation provides a consistent and clear model for developing a shared understanding of a family and their presenting issues. This formulation can travel with the family into different services and should reduce the number of assessments they have by providing an effective way to analyse the information we already have about their strengths and needs. Rethinking what we know about a family, and what we then do with that knowledge, is key to working with that family in a restorative and sustainable way.

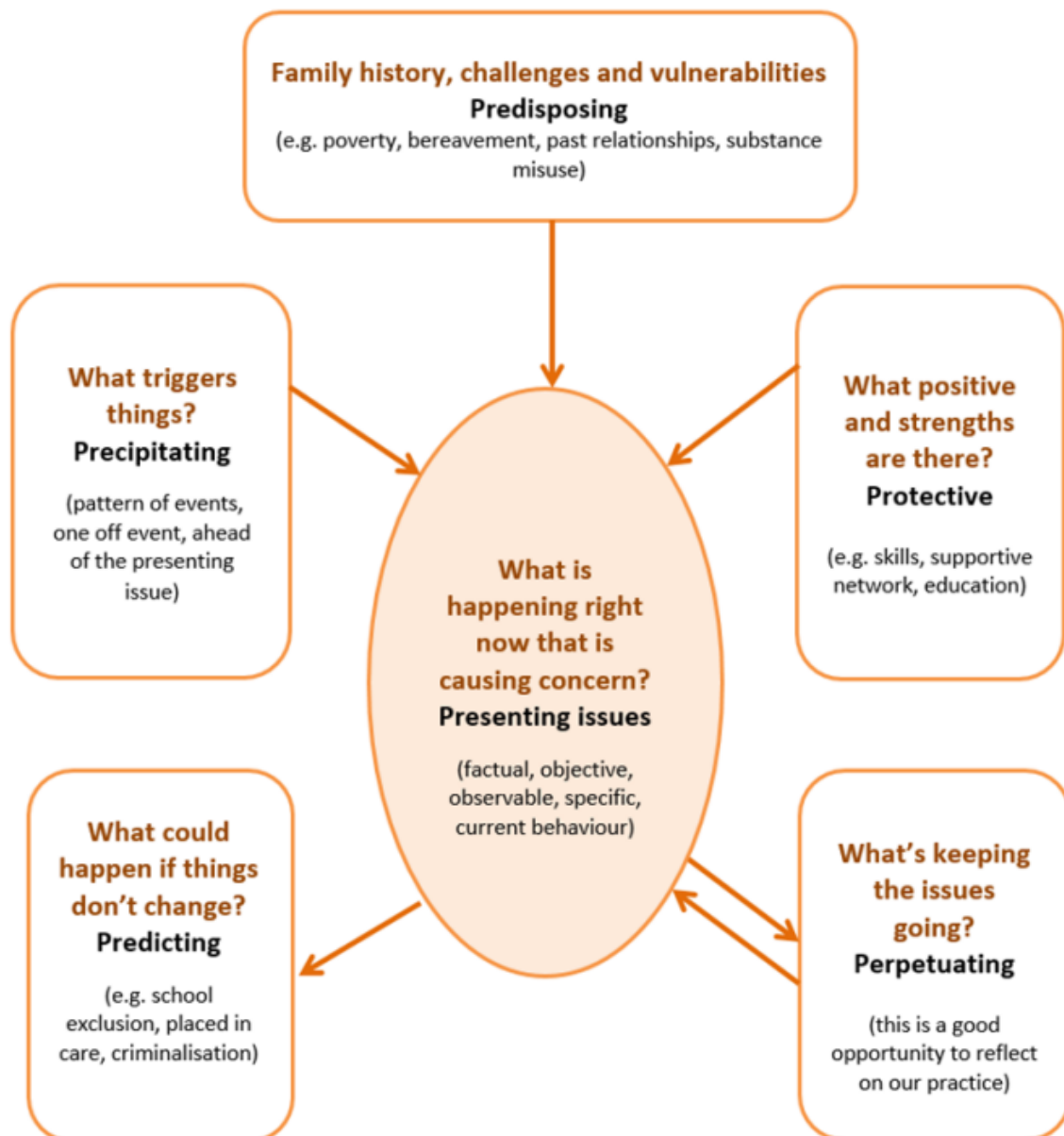
How are we using Rethink Formulation in Newcastle?

The aim is to extend the Rethink Formulation model into as many varied aspects of work with children, young people and their families as possible, to create a unified practice model across Newcastle. Practice will be centred within a series of regular and ongoing multi-agency Rethink Formulation forums and other complementary approaches.

The Rethink Formulation forums provide a valuable opportunity to develop our understanding and confidence in using the model in our day-to-day practice. Networking, and connecting with other agencies at forums and hearing their perspectives, also allows participants to reflect on the way we all work with children, young people and families.

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Forums are an opportunity to practice 'Rethinking' within a structured, reflective and restorative environment. It involves discussing a case within a multi-agency context, using Rethink Formulation to help participants understand how to use the model and how it may be applied within their own work setting. Many practitioners are attending forums; feedback shows they are finding the model and forums very useful and thought provoking.



You can find more rethink resources at the [Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership](#) website including a [Rethink Guide for Families](#) and [Rethink formulation tips and tricks for facilitation](#).

The content of this guide is taken from [Leeds Children's Services One Minute Guides](#) (2021)