



Better Together: Frequently Asked Questions

Is Better Together the same as the 6Cs?

The Better Together framework has 3 components: the vision, the shared behaviours and the 6Cs (C Change). For more information see the [Better Together One Minute Guide](#) Better Together is *relevant for our work across Early Help, the Youth Justice Service and Children's Social Care*. It has shaped the work developed in relation to our priority areas of Domestic Abuse (Repair), Harm Outside the Home and Neglect; it will continue to inform all other workstreams within the division.

Does Better Together mean we have now dropped Restorative Practice?

No. Better Together is built on the concepts and ideas of Restorative Practice, and is how we articulate our restorative way of working with children, their networks, and each other in Tower Hamlets. It also draws on ideas from Systemic and Trauma Informed practice.

What's the difference between Restorative Practice and Relationship Based Practice?

Relationship Based Practice and Restorative Practice are often used interchangeably to highlight that a key component of Restorative Practice is relationships. There was a tendency for Local Authorities in the UK who were using Restorative Practice as their practice framework in Children's Social Care, to use the term Relationship Based Practice as an easier to understand term. However, whilst this can be useful, we also recognise that the term Restorative Practice helpfully acknowledges a much wider and global body of practices, concepts and ideas that include informal and formal processes, both pro-active relationship building and re-active responses to harm such as Restorative Justice.

Is Better Together the same as Safe & Together?

No. Safe & Together is an approach to responding to domestic abuse in a way that holds the perpetrator to account for their behaviours which are harming their child and partner, and supports rather than burdens victims. During 2022/23 our training around domestic abuse was delivered by Safe & Together. Since then, we have built on the Safe & Together approach, to develop our own Tower Hamlets REPAIR framework for responding to domestic abuse. Whilst Safe & Together (and its successor, REPAIR) is very compatible with Better Together due to its emphasis on building relationships and repairing harm, Better Together is our practice framework which is relevant to the whole way we work, whereas Safe & Together relates solely to domestic abuse.

Is it relevant for people who don't work directly with children and their families/carers? Or who work solely with carers?

Yes. Wherever there are relationships, Restorative Practice and our Better Together Framework are relevant – because it's about how we connect with each other or those we are working with, irrespective of their age or role; how we keep being curious to understand, without making assumptions; how we build a supportive community; how we work with each other to agree plans; how we work together to help improve things; and then check back to see if what we agreed is making a difference, giving honest and respectful feedback where necessary.

How does this fit with Trauma Informed Practice?

We recognise that working in a Trauma Informed way is an important approach that is particularly emphasised within Early Help and some of our partner agencies such as Health and

Education. This is a great fit with a restorative way of working, because it encourages us to recognise how past trauma of both parties can influence our relationship building capacity. It also asks us to be curious, asking 'what happened to you?' rather than 'what's wrong with you?'. Being aware of the possible impact of trauma encourages us to resist re-traumatisation, and offer a greater sense of choice and control, empowerment, collaboration and safety. We view Trauma Informed Practice as being very compatible with and complementary to the Better Together Framework.

How does this fit with Systemic Practice?

The Better Together Framework is very compatible with systemic practice and draws from several key ideas from systemic practice. For example, the value of hypothesising to help us be curious, the recognition that those we are working with are located within a system / community, the importance of co-producing plans and working 'with' rather than doing 'to' or 'for' in order to enable second order change, and the desire to use our skills and those around us to collaborate for change.

What's the difference between a Family Group Conference, a Restorative Child Protection Conference and a Restorative Conference?

Family Group Conferences (FGC) are meetings that are organised by an independent FGC coordinator with the family network and child, to give them the space to make important decisions about how the family network can meet the child's needs. FGCs are a good example of a co-produced plan, with the family network being the primary decision makers, with support and input from the Local Authority to ensure that a safe FGC plan is agreed. In Tower Hamlets, all children and their families can be referred for an FGC whichever service the family are being supported through. The FGC should be offered at the earliest point in the child's life. For more information see this [FGC One Minute Guide](#) or email familygroup.conference@towerhamlets.gov.uk

A Restorative Child Protection Conference is a child protection conference that is held in a more restorative way, by ensuring parents/carers are really clear on why the meeting is taking place and what will happen. The conference focuses on the impact on the child and what needs to happen next, rather than on attributing blame and judgement. It will ensure that strengths and protective factors are also considered. For more information see this guide [Restorative Approach to Child Protection Conferences offer](#)

A Restorative Conference is what in Tower Hamlets we are more commonly referring to as a Facilitated Restorative Meeting in the hope of causing less confusion! However, internationally a Restorative Conference is a bringing together of 2 or more people where there is an unresolved conflict or harm, to give them a space to share their experience and listen to the experience of others. It uses an internationally recognised structured format to enable each participant to share what happened, what they were thinking at the time, what they are thinking about this since, who has been impacted and how, and finally, what needs to happen to move on. We now have a pool of trained facilitators and are starting to pilot this way of resolving conflict and repairing harm in Tower Hamlets – in our work with children and their families/carers and with each other. Speak to Marie Larvin for more details (Marie.Larvin@towerhamlets.gov.uk).

Where can I find out more?

There are various documents and resources to help you in this work. The best place to start if you are in the Supporting Families Division, is the Better Together folder in the SFD Teams folder which you can access here: [Better Together Resources](#)