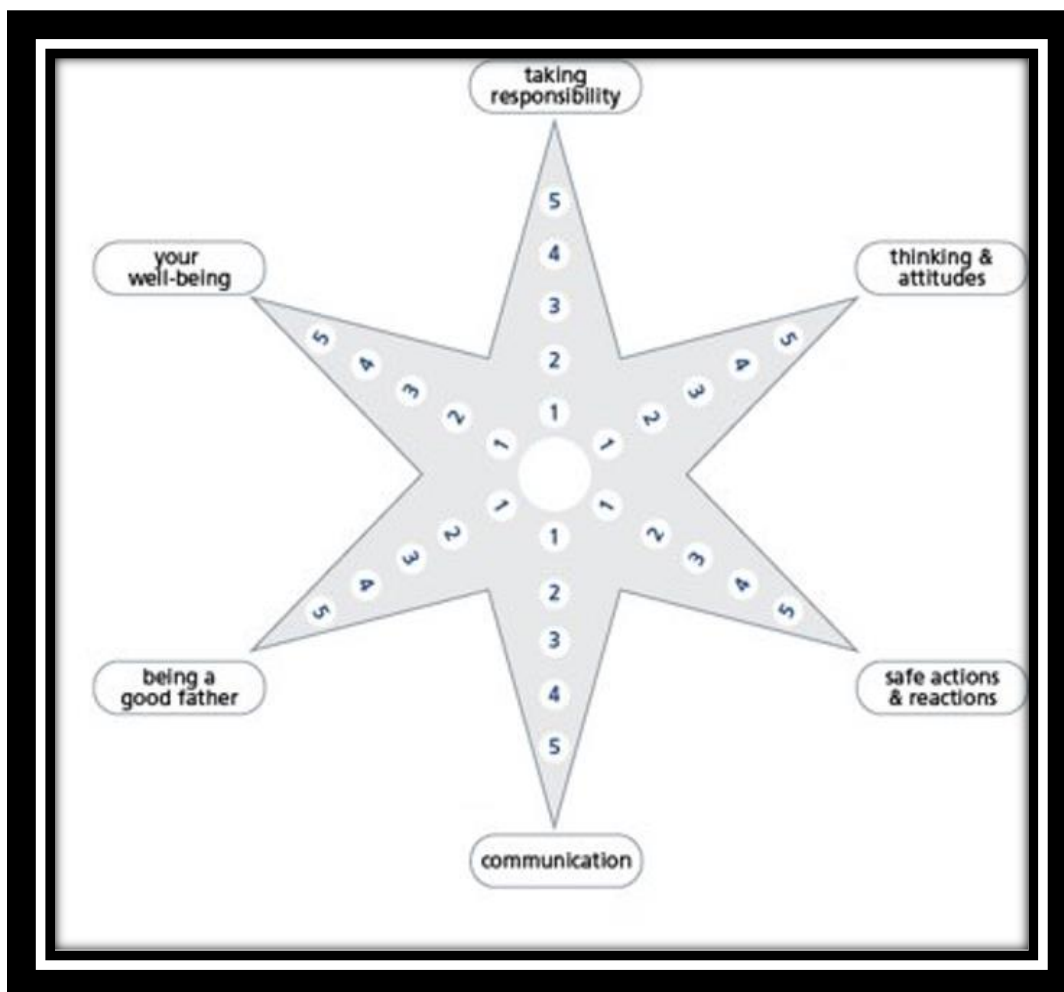


# Change Star™ Training Review



September 2023



Northumberland  
County Council

## Introduction:

The Change Star™ was developed by an organisation called Trangle and is part of their family of Outcome Stars. The Change Star™ training provides practitioners with a licensed tool to support conversations with men who are using abusive or controlling behaviours within their intimate relationships. The tool is to be used in a collaborative way with male service users and is designed to assist practitioners to underpin long-term changes within the families they work with in respect to Domestic Abuse. The Change Star™ provides a new approach when working with men to address their abusive behavior and it supports practitioners to start conversations about relationships, domestic abuse and assist in measuring their motivation to change their behaviour.

The Change Star™ training was incorporated into Northumberland County Councils (NCC) training programme in June 2022. It was initially available to practitioners working within Early Help (EH) and Childrens Social Care (CSC), however, was widened to include Adult Social Care (ASC) practitioners from November 2022.

In April 2022, as part of NCCs commissioned Northumberland Intergrated Domestic Abuse Service, Harbour was awarded the contract to operate a specialist changing behaviour service within Northumberland. The Change Star™ training supports and informs practitioners to make appropriate referrals into the changing behaviour service. It is crucial that referrals are made at the right time and when those using abusive and controlling behaviour are prepared and motivated to undertake the programme of work provided by Harbour. If practitioners can have constructive and meaningful conversations with men about their behavior and its impact before making referrals to the behaviour change service, then it can improve referral quality and positive outcomes for the men being referred, for victims and their children.

Introduction of the Change Star™ training was also in line with the aims of NCCs Domestic Abuse action plan and the ongoing positive changes within Northumberland's response to addressing domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse support services and interventions are predominately focused on victims/survivors and ensuring they have access to safety options and appropriate support. Recovery programmes are mainly survivor focused and survivor led. This is of course extremely important and focusing on the safety and wellbeing of victims and children is crucial in addressing safety and risk and is an integral part of the work towards ending domestic abuse. This essential work should continue, however in order to effectively address domestic abuse and work towards long term change we also need to engage with those using abusive and controlling behaviour and proactively support them to change. Getting this right is key to working towards ending domestic abuse and protecting women and children long term.

All other interventions and support provided to victims and their children should continue and run parallel to any Change Star™ work being undertaken. Practitioners are encouraged to take a multi-agency approach when using the Change Star™ and

consider risk and safety for women and children at every stage, as well as seeking specialist guidance and support from the integrated domestic abuse services.

Use of the Change Star has been embedded into Northumberland's Domestic Abuse Module on ICS and EHM. Team managers have been briefed on the Change Star™ training and encouraged to support their teams to consider its use in cases where Domestic Abuse has been identified.

### **Change Star™ Training Pilot:**

During June and July 2022 6 pilot sessions of the Change Star™ training took place. 3 sessions were delivered face to face and 3 were delivered via Teams.

59 delegates from EH and CSC attended and completed the training.

### **Feedback from Pilot:**

At the end of each session delegates were asked to complete an evaluation form and provide constructive feedback about the training. Overall, the feedback was positive, and delegates said they had enjoyed the training and found it useful and relevant to their role. Some of the feedback received resulted in some changes to the training which are outlined below:

- ***The training session was not long enough:*** The training was initially planned to be a 3.5-hour course; however, it was clear after the first session that this was not enough time to ensure all content was efficiently covered during the session. This was also reflected in the comments from delegates within post course evaluations. Because of this the course was extended to a 5-hour course with a 30-minute lunch break incorporated.
- ***More information about working with men who use abusive behaviour was needed:*** Many delegates on the training expressed a lack of knowledge, experience or confidence in having conversations with men who use abusive behaviour. This was a concern when looking to embed the star into their practice. Following further training from the Hampton Trust and their DARE (Domestic Abuse Routine Enquiry) programme, some learning from this was incorporated into the Change Star™ training to provide further information about ways to engage and work with men using abusive behaviour. This is, however, a brief overview of this specialist area of work, and a standalone training session may be required to address this area more robustly moving forward.
- ***Face to Face sessions is preferred:*** Delegates who attended the online sessions provided feedback that they would have preferred to attend this training face to face, due to the content and length of the course. More face-to-face sessions have since been provided and only 1 online session made available per

term. However as of March 2023, online sessions have been removed from the programme, and all Change Star™ training is now delivered face to face.

### Training sessions to date:

From October 2022 to July 2023 a further 7 training sessions have been arranged.

6 sessions took place and 1 was cancelled due to low numbers registered to attend.

The course material delivered during these sessions was updated to reflect the comments and feedback received from the pilot and the training was opened up to ASC.

A further 61 members of staff attended and completed the training.

In total, to date 120 staff have completed the Change Star™ training. This equates to:

Team	Number of staff who have completed training
Early Help	54
Childrens Social Care	52
Adults Social Care	14

### Change Star™ Training: Reflective feedback and reviews

#### February 2023 review:

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of February 2023 a review session took place. All practitioners who had completed the Change Star training were invited to attend. The session was facilitated online via Teams. Out of 95 practitioners invited, 22 attended.

During the review session practitioners were asked about their use of the Change Star™. The table below provides further details regarding responses received:

Have you used the change star in practice since attending the training?	If you haven't completed the Change Star™ yet, why? If you have, what was your experience?	What would help you embed the Change Star™ into your practice?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> <li>• No</li> <li>• No not yet</li> <li>• No but have supported someone else</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no appropriate cases to use it with</li> <li>• I have offered it and been refused</li> <li>• Has not been appropriate for my current case load</li> <li>• I haven't had a family where this was ok to offer to use.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think further training would be beneficial</li> <li>• maybe re visit resources once case is appropriate</li> <li>• A case study to go through in depth</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not feel confident enough to deliver it</li> <li>• No appropriate cases</li> <li>• I have changed teams and have not had the need to use it</li> <li>• really enjoyed the training and felt quite exciting by the information in it, however as discussed at the training felt it would be difficult to use as we work whole family and not easy or appropriate to work with both survivor and perpetrator</li> <li>• It not been appropriate yet and I haven't pushed to use it if I'm honest because it has to be a different worker doing it with just dad it's hard to initiate this in our small team</li> </ul>	<p>with it. So maybe a real case study.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowing how to if person is not aware victim has disclosed abuse</li> <li>• I don't feel like I understand the use of the tool fully and how to know when to use it and how to use it.</li> <li>• How to approach it more confidently</li> <li>• Seen it used in a role play/case study and the process how its then recorded on the system.</li> <li>• confidence to use the tool, maybe a few practice sessions with yourself</li> <li>• Speaking with someone who has completed it with a few males and found it beneficial</li> </ul>
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Practitioners were also asked about the Changing Behaviour service in Northumberland and if they have used this intervention for advice, support or made referrals to the service.

<b>Have you made a referral to the Changing behaviour service?</b>	<b>If not, why?</b>	<b>Is there anything that would support you in accessing the service and/or making a referral?</b>
No	Not appropriate.	No Perhaps a direct contact to talk it through with or a flow chart.
No	I have not needed too	Direct referral form
No	Have not had the need for my cases Some cases already had services in place	To learn more about the service so I know if the service is appropriate

No	Person was not ready for change as accepted no responsibility	Someone to chat through my referral with first - to see if it is appropriate
No	Never worked with a male that needed to	I'm not sure as I haven't needed to make a referral
No	Not needed to yet	A leaflet reminder of what it is about
No	No appropriate referrals	Some stories/comments feedback from professionals and perpetrators
No	Not working with a family, I think it was appropriate for.	No
No	Not needed	To work with someone who has completed it
No	It hasn't been appropriate for any of the families that I have worked with	More awareness, quick links
No	I'm not sure of what the services does / didn't know it existed	
No	Not needed	
No	No need too at this time as cases are not relevant.	
No	I don't work directly with families	
No	Not had the need to or appropriate case	
No	I didn't know much about it and no cases were relevant.	
No	Carry small caseload now don't hold families	
No	No appropriate person or refusal to do it	
No	Not been appropriate,	
No	Haven't always remembered it	
No	Not yet needed to	
No	I have not taken on a case for a male who is known to abuse women.	

During the review session practitioners in attendance also received a briefing about working with those who harm. This briefing used the additional learning from The

Hampton Trust DARE training, which was also embedded into the Change Star training in October 2022. This ensured as many practitioners as possible benefited from the learning and additional information.

**August 2023 review:**

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 2023 all delegates who have completed the Change Star training were contacted via email and provided with a link to an Easy Retro board. Delegates were asked to provide information about their use of the Change Star, so information could be collated to assess the effectiveness of the training and Change Star in practice, as the training has now been delivered for a full year. Delegates were asked to provide their responses by the 25<sup>th</sup> of August 2023.

The number of responses was not as hoped, and the feedback is therefore limited making it difficult to establish a deeper understanding directly from trained practitioners about the use of Change Star and its impact on practice.

The table below provides further details regarding the responses received:

<b>Have you used the change star within your practice since attending the training?</b>	<b>If you haven't completed the Change Star™ yet, why?</b>	<b>If you have completed the Star, what was your experience?</b>
No, I have not used the Change Star yet, but I am working with 2 families where I am going to explore the Empowerment Star with them with the plan that they will engage with the programme	No appropriate cases	not completed any Star programme to date .
Yes, I did 1 Change Star. The person was not ready to change so did not have a referral to Harbour, though we did make an action plan, but then he moved out of the family home.	As we work with the whole family, it can be difficult as we were told not to do Change Star with one parent while also doing Empowerment Star with the other. We haven't had someone else willing to take on the other piece of work	I completed an Empowerment Star, and this was positive with the person managing to improve scores on the star after worked together. With another family I have started an Empowerment Star and so far, this is positive. However, with another family, having to complete the RIC first on our system to start the Pathway is a barrier as this would mean her reliving

		past trauma by having to answer the RIC questions, as the DA is not current. However, going straight to the Empowerment Star would be more positive
No not yet, I was supposed to use it a few weeks ago but the family have gone on holiday	No appropriate cases	Not completed any Star programme to date
No, I have not used it yet.	No appropriate cases	I don't have appropriate cases for this work to be undertaken. But I have two colleagues who have gone through the process now on EHM and will be completing the empowerment star. We have not been able to complete the Change Star to date.
I have not used the change star with my cases. But two of the family help workers I supervise have started the process of the empowerment star with two women. But the women have not consented to ex partners being contacted or the change star discussed.	No appropriate cases	
I have not yet used it as I have had no identified need to date the families I am currently working with.	Although we have been apprehensive of using the change star, we have started the conversation with the women. It is their concerns about the possible repercussions from ex-partners that have prevented us going any further as the work we	



	undertake is consent based.	
Unfortunately, I've not used the change star at all so I can't say that it has changed my practice. The training did highlight some thinking for my own knowledge base though and how I would approach someone to use it.	No appropriate cases	
Completing the Change Star is not part of my job, however when I'm undertaking conferences, I'm not hearing that this is being used by any of the SW in locality teams	I am firstly not that confident as been a long time since training. However, I have offered it at the beginning of my training to a dad and he was reluctant to do this	
No i have not used it yet. However, I am working with a family and i will look to use the changing star with them to assess if they are ready and would benefit from a referral.	no appropriate case to date	

**Conclusions and actions from feedback and review sessions:**

The Change Star has not been embedded into practice as hoped. The reasons behind this need to be explored and further insight established as it has been difficult to fully understand why based on the low levels of feedback received so far.

Some actions have been taken during the course of the last year following feedback and to support practitioners to embed this training into practice. They are as follows:

- **Further training** – additional training and a recap of the Change Star was provided at the review session in February 2023. Lesley Pyle (Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Co Ordinator Northumberland and North Tyneside) and Lucy Smith (Domestic Abuse Learning and Development Advisor) have attended multiple EH and CSC team meetings to answer questions, provide information and guidance and to seek further clarity on why the Star is not being used. Useful resources and information have been sent via email to all trained

practitioners, as well as reminder emails about implementing the tool and asking for feedback and/or success stories. These actions will continue.

A 7-minute briefing resource has also been developed and shared with all trained practitioners, to act as a guidance tool and to enhance the learning from the training.

- **No suitable cases** – Several practitioners have stated that they don't have any appropriate cases to undertake this piece of work. A high percentage of cases referred to EH and CSC will be as a result of concerns about Domestic Abuse. Practitioners are encouraged to identify cases where domestic abuse is a concern and consider if the Change Star is appropriate. We should see a higher number of appropriate cases being identified.

Managers have been encouraged to remind their staff about using the Change Star, particularly in case supervision. If managers identify a case where Change Star could be appropriate, they have been asked to discuss this with the lead practitioner and support them to complete this piece of work. As part of the training course, practitioners are also advised as best practice to record and evidence in their case notes their decision making, if they do not use the Change Star.

Independent reviewing officers (IROs) have been briefed on the Change Star, during a bespoke training session in May 2023. At this training session the IROs in attendance were encouraged to ask about the Change Star and if it has been considered during child protection conferences, where appropriate.

- **Lack of Confidence** – Practitioners have shared concerns that they don't feel confident embedding the Star and that they are worried about increasing the risk towards victims and their children. They have also expressed that they are worried about talking directly to men who use abusive behaviour, and for some practitioners this is something they have never done before. The training provides best practice and safety planning guidance to address these concerns. Practitioners are advised they should work in a multi-agency approach and communication with the specialist integrated domestic abuse services is crucial. They are also provided with an overview and contact details for the Changing Behaviour service in Northumberland so they can seek support and advice, as well as other national behaviour change resources available to them. As with any change it may take time for practitioners to feel comfortable, however it is important that they begin to use the Change Star as soon as possible following on from the training to develop their confidence and practice their skills. They are directed to seek further support from managers and colleagues following the training to overcome some of these barriers.

It is established throughout the training that if conversations with men about their abusive behaviour continue to be avoided, then the responsibility for this

behaviour continues to be misplaced and the long-term risk towards women and children cannot be reduced or appropriately addressed and appropriate referrals to behaviour change interventions will be limited.

- **Staffing levels** – Some concerns have been raised regarding staffing levels and the impact this could have on using the Star appropriately. Triangle advise as best practice, that if a practitioner is going to be undertaking the Change Star work with the male in the family, then a different practitioner should undertake recovery work with the victim. This only applies in cases where the family remains living together and it is related to risk management and creating a safe space for both the person using harmful behaviour and the victim to be able to talk openly about what is happening. Triangle recommends that practitioners should work with another colleague within the same team and share this workload if appropriate, however direct work with victims could be completed with one of the specialist Domestic Abuse Services in Northumberland. Practitioners have been reminded to communicate with these services, work in partnership and to make referrals where appropriate. If staffing levels are the reason why the Star is not being used, then this issue and a resolution to it should be considered by managers.
- **Changing Behaviour Service:** Lucy Smith has met with Emma Goding who manages this specialist intervention, and Emma has advised that the number of referrals within Northumberland is not as high as expected. It was evident within the Change Star review session that practitioners have not been utilising this service. However, verbal feedback received during Change Star training sessions from practitioners reflects that they have been contacting the behaviour change service for advice, and this has been a useful resource for them. Emma Goding also indicated that although the referral numbers are lower than expected, the referral quality has been high and the engagement level of those who have been referred is positive.

### Other work to consider moving forward:

**Joint working:** Emma Goding and Lucy Smith continue to liaise and work together. There are plans to create a briefing session for practitioners in Northumberland about the Change Star and Changing Behaviour service. It is hoped that this will improve the use of the Star and increase the number of referrals.

**Family hubs and working with men:** There is lots of work happening within the family hubs aimed at Dads and looking at ways to make them visible and present in the hubs and within services. It is hoped that this will help practitioners develop their confidence and skills in working with Men, talking to them about their family and personal life and in turn support use of the Change Star.

**Consistent messages in training:** All NCC domestic abuse training materials have been reviewed and updated to ensure that the language we use about men who harm is

consistent throughout. This reflects the approach we are taking in Northumberland in relation to domestic abuse and creates a consistent message for practitioners.

**Domestic Abuse Pathway:** The Change Star has been included within the pathway for practitioners on Domestic Abuse Module and ICS. There is lots of work happening around embedding this module into practice and it is hoped that this will also lead to more practitioners accessing the Change Star and making full use of the resource.

**Change Star champions:** Once practitioners begin to use the Change Star and can share some positive case studies then appointing Change Star Champions may be helpful. This would be a supportive role and would mean those with more experience or confidence in using the Star could be contacted by colleagues who are less experienced and/or confident for support, guidance and reassurance.

**Additional training to enhance Change Star training:** Although the Change Star training looks at some elements of how to work with men who harm, it is not possible to look at this in detail. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) has commissioned a roll out of the DARE training with Hampton Trust in Northumberland. This offer includes `train the trainer` sessions. It is hoped that this offer will develop this area of training and support practitioners to build skills, knowledge and confidence in working with those who harm and support them in their use of the Change Star.

**Culture Change:** Implementation of the Change Star training has highlighted a much deeper issue regarding working with men who harm and how practitioners manage cases involving domestic abuse. Embedding this new way of working will require a culture change and with any change, this is proving to be challenging. Further work may be needed to explore this more deeply and consider how we can tackle this within NCC. The ongoing work taking place outside of the Change Star training, such as the White Ribbon agenda, will also help to develop a robust and effective response to addressing and tackling domestic abuse in Northumberland and help to embed this culture change.

*Written by Lucy Smith, Domestic Abuse Learning and Development Advisor.*