Breaking down Barriers

Developing an Approach to Include Fathers in Children's Social Care

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Abstract

The thesis describes a piece of research undertaken by a group of social work practitioners who experimented with different techniques and practices in their work-place in an attempt to include fathers. The research took place over a thirty-six month period in a Local Authority Children's Service in London. The research was supported by senior managers within Children Social Care and by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

The research asks why and how fathers have been excluded from children and family social work. The research goes on to asks what strategies, methods, conditions and techniques promote inclusive practice for fathers whilst examining the role of 'the self' as a researcher, practitioner and participant. The research strategy was based on the participation of practitioners in a co-operative inquiry supported by 'a before and after' case file audit designed to test whether the co-operative inquiry, which operated within a 'front-line' child protection service, brought about practice change.

The aims of the research were; to design and implement a co-operative inquiry, instigate a range of inclusive targets to support the implementation of a father inclusive strategy across the whole system.

The research concluded that children and family social work is one of the few institutions to confront the perversities and abuses of traditional gender and power relations and this confrontation has led to 'paternal alienation'.

The work of the co-operative inquiry led to an increase in fathers identified and assessed. An increase in fathers attending meetings and reviews and an increase in fathers recorded as having parental responsibility and an increase in contact arrangements for fathers. There was also a sizeable increase in social workers' considering the father's situation in ongoing planning for the child.

We learnt that we can include fathers if there is 'a whole system and a participative approach' which identifies how covert power and gender relations influence behaviour in practice. To achieve greater father inclusion social workers' anxieties need to be contained through safety planning systems and quality reflective supervision. For fathers to be included senior managers must support the activity in the long term, (ten to fifteen years), collect data and set targets whilst strategically committing and realigning resources to meaningfully address domestic abuse.

The research identified that organisational change is possible if the conditions to foster emergence are in place, if the culture that operates in the organisation

supports emergent creativity whilst espousing staff cohesion simultaneously championing social worker empowerment.

This research adds to knowledge in the areas of; father inclusion, risk assessment in child protection, domestic abuse, management, gender and power relations, leadership, group work, participation and collaboration in achieving organisational change.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

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1. *Part One: Introducing the Research*

As a social worker, whenever I have worked with fathers, I cannot help but think of my own father and how I experienced him as a parent. After all, he was my primary and most influential reference point. As I became seasoned as a social worker, I began to reflect that colleagues must share similar thoughts. These early reflections led me to study the role of fathers, especially abusive fathers within statutory Children's Social Care interventions.

This research describes an experiment where a group of social workers applied different techniques to include fathers in statutory social work assessments and interventions. In this introduction, I describe the rationale for the research, the research questions and aims and I describe the structure of this thesis. My primary intention is to; '*delve beneath surfacing meaning*' to understand the complexities of organisational life that obstruct social workers and organisations from the primary task. Holding this in mind, I reflect over the professional and personal reasons that brought about this research and which influenced the research process and findings.

2. *Rationale: Why include fathers?*

The literature on masculinity and fatherhood has recently shifted focus toward the study of the exclusion of fathers from statutory services. (Ashley et al: 2011, 2008, 2006, Amussen & Weizel: 2011, Hahn: 2011, Featherstone et al: 2010 and 2007, OFSTED: 2011, Fatherhood Institute: 2010 – 2005 and Smithgall: et al 2009). This research contributes to this 'shift in focus' by providing colleagues with a detailed analysis of the implementation of an action research project to include fathers within a Children's Social Care Service in London. The demonstration of power and control through violence, particularly domestic abuse and the subsequent fear it creates is a constant thread that 'weaves' its way through this thesis.

The rationale to include fathers is founded in statue and through research. For example; the law clearly requires father involvement as fathers have the right to family life. The Gender Recognition Act (2004) explicitly requires that services make available equal but separate services for women and men. (Fatherhood Institute: 2011).

A further example is through research on child development where evidence indicates that fathers have a sincere influence on the health and wellbeing of mothers and babies. Fathers have an on-going long-standing effect on the development and attainment of their children. (Rosenberg & Wilcox: 2006). The birth of a child is a watershed in a man's life and presents the biggest opportunity to engage fathers: 86% of fathers are present at the birth of their babies. Mothers want fathers to be well treated as mothers benefit in a range of ways when the fathers of their children are involved and well informed. (Ashley et al: 2008).

My assertion is that fathers involvement in children's lives must be assessed, that they could be both a risk and resource to children and if abusive, then they must be held to account for that abusiveness.

In 2009, I completed a small preliminary research activity on how social workers thought about men. I discovered that fathers were excluded due to shifting social, structural and demographic changes as well as specifically due to the nature of modern social work. I learnt that social workers exclude fathers because of the influence of their family origin, life experience and through assumption and prejudice. The research exposed an endemic fear in social workers, (who are predominately female), that they will be at risk of violent sexual attack by fathers. The research determined that social workers had an important function in role modelling behaviours to; demonstrate survival, that it was possible to escape from gendered oppression and structural discrimination, that it is right to strive to hold men responsible for their children actions and abuses, whilst also role modelling skills, language and techniques in how to be a good mother. The research revealed that social work organisations have a responsibility to support social workers engage fathers, for example;

- ensuring there are functioning health and safety procedures,
- that appropriate reflective supervision takes place,
- that Key Performance Indicators on father engagement are used,
- that training is provided in masculinity and father engagement and that there is appropriate challenge.

I concluded with the recommendation that Children Social Care implement a series of procedures, policies and practices to support the inclusion of fathers. From that experience, I developed five research questions which act as the foundation for this research in order to achieve my overall aim of improving practice.

Research Questions

- Why have fathers been continually excluded from the social work task?
- How do we currently exclude fathers from social work practice?
- Is it possible to create the conditions, in one Local Authority, for fathers to be included in social work practice? If so, how?
- What strategies, methods and techniques appear to promote inclusive practice for men?
- Why am I doing this research? What is the connection between the personal, professional and managerial self and what was the impetus to initiate and complete this project?

3. *The Research*

The research was conducted in a Children's Social Care Service in central London over a three year period. The borough is typically diverse in terms of ethnicity, culture, class and economic circumstance. 116 languages are spoken and the borough scores high in relation to poverty measures.

The research is a linear and process related inquiry. I have used co-operative inquiry, psychoanalytical thinking, complexity and systems thinking to facilitate reflexivity, to conceptually organise my thoughts and find answers. I describe the research process because I want to pass on the experience and collective knowledge of our successes and failures in trying to include fathers in social work interventions. This thesis acts as a vehicle to evaluate the research.

I explore how defensive thinking can be proactively deconstructed. To achieve this, I adopted a pro-feminist orientation and have turned to psychodynamic and realist social constructionist perspectives. As the research matured, I have also applied chaos and complexity theories to further understand how a group of practitioners can facilitate change within a highly complex organisation. (Pawson: 2006).

A number of possible theoretical positions could have been utilized during the life of the research. However, as the research evolved and we achieved greater insight, an association appeared in the relationship between the research aims and the research processes as we applied the research methodology. For example; as social workers we are confronted each day by the gross inequalities of gender and power relations through domestic abuse, the sexual abuse of children and the rape of women. As the research progressed, I realised these gender and power relationships and inequalities, (although in a covert and unconscious manner), were present within the research activity itself. The analysis of gender, in relation to the research questions, provided ample material. However, I feel I need to mention this because I could have equally explored race and racism, class and classism or sex and sexuality to the same degree of detail. I chose gender because of the obvious links to the research questions and its dominance. This thesis charts my learning and development as a student, manager, researcher, social worker and as a man. I reflect on key learning points with the aim to augment and sophisticate my effectiveness as a manager and leader as well as be a better man. I attempted to accomplish this by assuming, what Hughes and Pengally (2004) describe as a 'third position' as a research practitioner researching 'inside' my own organisation. I believe this research represents '*a valid body of knowledge*'. It is a piece of work which is grounded in evidence based practice because it is conducted at the very heart of the social work profession by a group of social worker practitioners who became a '*community of practitioners*' converging to share and to learn collectively.

To be compliant, I feel it important to state my contribution in the methodology. My role was to establish the project and co-facilitate and support the project. I wrote the contracts and led on all academic activities. I wrote this thesis alone although, as guided by Heron (1996) I have shared the findings and this thesis with those who

participated. I believe each Chapter demonstrates that this work is mine and it is original. My fellow co-inquirers attended six weekly co-operative inquiry meetings and actively worked towards engaging fathers in our organisation. This research adds to the knowledge in the area of father inclusion, risk assessment in child protection, domestic abuse, management, leadership, group work and participation and collaboration in achieving organisational change. (Rosenberg & Wilcox: 2006, Stacey: 2003). The research has the ultimate goal of contributing to keeping children safe whilst remaining within their families. (Cook-Craig & Sabah: 2009).

Objective of the Research

To create a conceptual model, grounded and thoroughly test by the co-operative inquiry, of a sustainable system that brings about transformation in one area of practice in one local authority.

Aims of the Research

1. To design and implement a co-operative inquiry to include fathers in Children's Social Care in order to achieve practical, operational systemic change to front line services. This will include the need to develop comprehensive syntheses of existing research in order to develop a collective overview as to what works. (Pawson: 2006).
2. Develop the skills of co-inquirers in facilitation, group processes and methods and practices of inclusive practice whilst developing my own management and group facilitation skills.
3. Create and adopt a fatherhood strategy with realistic goals and targets. This should include a policy for communicating with fathers and an explicit code of practice for dealing with fathers and male carers. This strategy should be communicated and discussed with all staff and visible for families.
4. Identify objectives for engagement with fathers as a whole agency, individual services and individual staff, with these objectives being discussed in supervision and appraisal systems as well as being used for performance management.
5. Refine the existing referral and assessment process and the accompanying paperwork to ensure that fathers' data is collected explicitly, systematically and accurately.
6. Use data collection system/s to regularly assess patterns of use in services, and identify areas where fathers are not being included to focus communication and services.
7. Ensure that training is available for staff at every level of the organisation/s in father-inclusive practice. This will ensure that father-inclusive practice

becomes embedded in all levels of work and not reliant on the commitment of targeted services or committed individuals within teams.

8. Establish better pathways and referral processes between generic "preventative" provision including Children's Centres and related services and "crisis" intervention services. This could enable vulnerable fathers to be identified and supported earlier.
9. Ensure appropriate focused and gender specific information is available to give fathers ante-natally and subsequently. This information, publicity and communication should state "mother, fathers and other care

In order to achieve these research aims I have adopted an action research methodology which was supported via a case-file audit as a pre and post-test of the action research.

4. *Thesis Structure*

I have taken Pawson's (2006) and Heron's (1996) advice in writing this thesis which follows a rather adventurist, practice and evidence based structure. The ground is cleared, principles incorporated, an assessment is provided, claims are made, claims are authenticated, points of view are taken and exemplified and conclusions made. I repeatedly link and cross reference method with findings throughout the thesis.

The thesis is divided into ten Chapters.

This Chapter provides the reader with an overview of the research including the research questions, aims and a rationale why fathers need to be included. I dedicate most of this Chapter to my personal, professional and academic biographical journey so the reader is aware of the 'lenses' I use to interpret the data. I link how these biographical experiences brought me to the research questions whilst advising the reader that the influences of these biographical experiences can be located in most pages of this thesis.

Chapter 2 reviews current thinking in and around the research questions and topic. It is my description of an objective reality. Chapter 2 starts with a series of hypotheses about the macro causal relationships as to the exclusion of fathers from statutory children and family social work intervention. Hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinity, the changing nature of the modern family are discussed and analysed. Using international research, I apply these hypotheses and causal relationships to UK children and family social work. I describe, in technical detail, the causes to fathers' 'invisibility' in social work whilst naming what techniques work in father inclusive practice.

Chapter 3 describes the research method. It explains the application of an Action Research methodology supported via a pre and post case-file audit. After justifying the research design I describe the cycle of action and reflection that defines co-operative inquiry in detail and then justify the reasoning for this methodology. I

describe how we applied the research methodology and how we made sense of the data. I describe the data analysis process and procedures and the salient features that classify the logic behind the methodological cycle of reflection and action that defines co-operative inquiry.

Chapter 4 is a chronological summary recording the key stages of methodological implementation. This chapter needs to be read in-conjunction with Appendix 2 which chronological records the process of research cycling identifying what was emergent, all actions and occurrences and new practices that were generated from the process of research. The chronology is crucial to this thesis acting as the official record of the research experience and application and evidence of the methodology.

Chapter 5 concentrates on how the co-operative inquiry was established. There is a description, a reflection and an analysis of the identification and induction of potential research participants and then the first full reflection – action – immersion – reflection cycle and a description of the application of the analytical framework. The voices of the co-inquirers dominate this chapter.

Chapter 6 follows on by describing the initial themes identified from ten research cycles with reflection absorbed in deconstructing complex and 'unspoken' themes. In this sixth chapter, the intermediate themes, discourses and postulations start to emerge again through the voices of the co-inquirers.

In Chapter 7 I review how the co-operative inquiry concluded. I analyse the process, views and reflections of co-operative inquiry members from the final two cycles of action and reflection. I concentrate on '*what has not been said but has been operating beneath the surface of the inquiry*. (Huffington, C. *et al* 2007: 1)

Chapter 8 provides an analysis of the findings from the pre and post-case file audit. .

Chapter 9 reviews the research experience, the process of emergence and organisational change by applying a systems perspective, complexity and chaos theories.

Chapter 10 I re-evaluate the research questions correlating research actions and reflections with emergence. I conclude the thesis with a discussion on how the research aims were achieved and what inhibited further research activity.

A word on the research methodology; we employed a co-operative inquiry supported by a pre and post case file audit (which identified basic practice at the beginning of the research and then again at the end of the co-inquiry to test whether practice had change). The methodology is illustrated in Diagram 1. Co-operative inquiry was chosen because of its traditions and alliances to social work and practice near research particularly with its proven capacity to bring about behavioural change with those who participate. For example see Mead (2002). Co-operative inquiry is a methodology that meaningfully involves social workers in the development of practice for example see; Baldwin (2009), Friedman (2009) or Torbet (2009). Co-

operative inquiry is founded on empowerment and encourages reflection for example see; Rudolph et al (2009) and Senge and Scharmer (2009) who undertook a similar exercise amongst practitioners in a complex organisation. Co-operative inquiry has the capacity to develop and empower social workers and serve our profession by providing a regular 'space' where we, as practitioner / researchers, could reflect together on the learning from our actions for example see Marshall (2009) or Heron and Reason (2009). It is a proven method for those practitioners researching their own organisation for example see; Chisholm (2009) and Barrett (2009). Co-operative inquiry appeals to the principles and ethics of the social work profession. Subsequently I use many quotes from those who took part in the research; their voices can be heard in every Chapter.

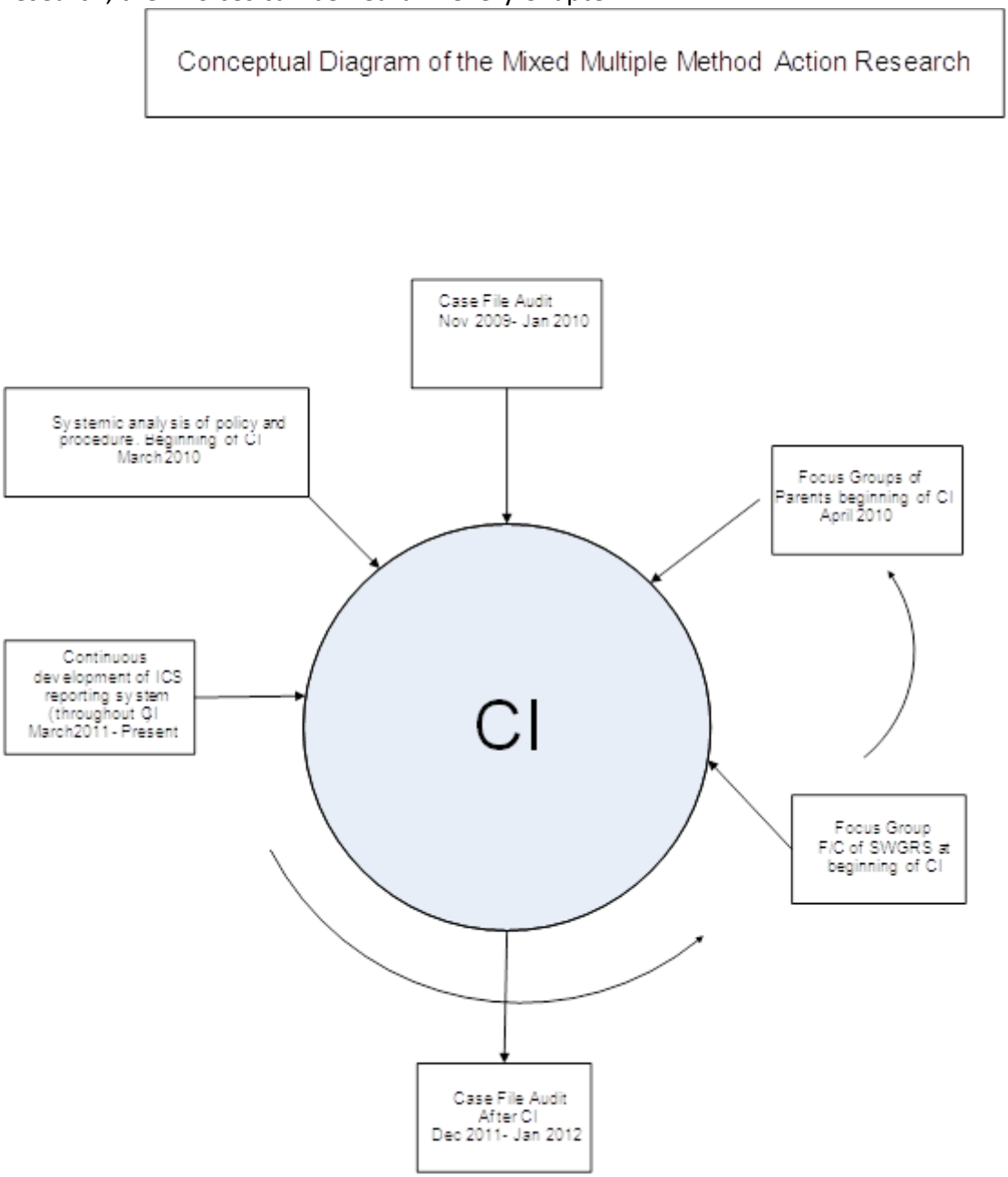


Diagram 1

Part Two: The Author's influence

Action research supports introspection which proved pivotal because of my self-awareness in terms of the topic and my function, role and influence. This is why I explore my influence on the research process by providing a personal biography and reflecting on how this has influenced the research design, process, analysis and outcomes. My introspection, via the personal biography, provides an examination of the filters and lenses through which I see the world. Reflecting on the personal biography helps explore and understand my unique and individual influence on the research. The personal biography attempts to explain through example how and why I understood and organised the research and why I made the conclusions I did. Reflection, using action research facilitated further introspective, peer critique and mutual collaboration. The personal biography informs how my personal history has led me to this research. It outlines my values and informs my subjectivity. It positions my gender, ethnicity, class and cultural influence and professional experience in relation to the research and to those co-inquirers.

It identifies where the power is held in relation to this research project and identifies my position in the power hierarchy and is an example of reflexivity in research that typifies this research project. (Reason and Bradbury et al: 2009, Winter & Munn-Giddings: 2003).

The research methodology with its focus on practice, practitioner participation and reflection are concepts advanced by Professor Eileen Munro (2011) in her review of the Child Protection System in England. Professor Munro endorsed the need for re-organisation and practitioner empowerment based on principles of reflection and systems. This thesis advances these principals not only in social work practice but in alternative ways to manage and organise social work services, a further rationale for the personal biography.

1. Context

I reflect on why I chose this subject to research. I position myself critically evaluating my own involvement, my influence and my assumptions and how they have influenced this research experience. I think it crucial that I place 'myself' within the research and identify what is distinctive about this experience and what makes it distinctive from what other men might bring to the research.

2. Background to the Project; The Personal Context of the Research and Reflexive Considerations

This is a thesis about fathers, families and an attempt to support and even 'repair' family relationships. Within this context, it is important to 'locate the author' and reflect on my 'personal biography'. Even more so when one considers that this research activity has been driven and influenced by me consciously and unconsciously. I reflect on the origins of my motivation for the research as my influence, and my role within the entire project, has been instrumental. I recognise

that the perspectives or 'lenses' I utilize to interpret the research experience have shaped the process and the outcomes. Therefore, insight into how my personal biography influences the research is a constant source of data as well as a valid point of reflection. I summarise my parents' lives and my own childhood as well as my current circumstances in an attempt, inter-generationally, to link them with the research questions.

3. My Father

My father was born in 1938 in London. He was the second child; his sister was born in 1936. My paternal grandparents were killed in 1941. My father and his sister were then separated and my father was placed in an orphanage remaining there for the remainder of the war. This had a devastating effect on my father's development as he had lost his primary attachment figure and was subjected to abuse and neglect whilst institutionalised. He was also bullied at school by his peers and verbally humiliated by teachers as he suffered from dyslexia. Aged 7 my father was adopted by his maternal aunt and her husband. My father's sister remained separated from my father and was cared for by her great grandmother. His adopted father died in 1965 and his adopted mother lived on until 1989. My father met my mother in 1963, they married in 1965 moved from London to Kent in 1966 and I was born in 1967. My brother was born in 1969.

In speaking to my father about his childhood he looks back on his adoptive parents with love and respect and to this day, speaks fondly of both of them especially his adopted father who he idealised. My father speaks fluently and reliably about his childhood although he glosses over the first few years. He much prefers the account of his happy, advantaged and secure later childhood with his adoptive parents. My father remained in their care until he achieved majority when he was 'called up' as part of his National Service. After two years of service including military action in Libya and Suez he returned to London and entered a career in international logistics.

My mother reports that the first few years after my and my brother's birth were happy. However, by 1974 my father had started drinking heavily. At the same time my father's career flourished. He was promoted quickly from one management position to the next. His office was based in central London however with his promotion came an expectation that he travel internationally. As his career grew so did the number of weeks and months he spent away from the family home. My father considered that part of his employment function was to socialise, we would often have visitors from across the world staying with us and inevitably alcohol became a powerful enabler in social activities.

My father's drinking continued to worsen and he lost his driving license in 1978. Arguments between my parents were constant normally, on the surface about money. Around this time, (late 1970s), my parents' relationship broke down and my father left the family home for an extended sixth month trip abroad. On his return they reunited. This pattern of separation and reunification defined our family system until 1982 when my mother filed for divorce.

My father has a strong work ethic and a potent sense of his gender identity, role formation and hierarchies. He understood his role as a father to be a provider especially in terms of my and my brother's education. My father held strong, socially constructed patriarchal values which were driven generationally and within his cultural and patriarchal context as a hegemonic male. After their divorce my father married his former secretary in 1987. They have remained married. My father retired at the age of 52 and they both moved to the north of England. They returned to London in 2002. On reflection the early formation and construction of 'father' which developed in me was one of a traditional head of a nuclear family who was distant and maintained hegemony through economic and physical power.

4. My Mother

My mother was born in 1941 she had an older brother born in 1938 and a younger brother born in 1952. My maternal grandparents were married for 20 years. My maternal grandmother's life was devastated in 1955 when my maternal uncle, my mother's older brother, died of TB. Within a year my maternal grandmother died leaving my mother, aged 14, as the main carer for both her father and younger brother then aged 6. This had a profound and lasting effect on my mother shaping a powerful maternal function as a carer and limiting her educational career.

Aged 18 my mother trained as a secretary. She was a talented, attractive woman receiving many offers of marriage. Aged 23 my mother met my father. At this point, my parents presented as a heterosexual couple supported within a predominately paternal kinship system of extended family, which included the majority of its important social relations. Among fewer variations than in our contemporary society, my father was typically the manager of the nuclear family's property, he represented the family in public duties and functions and provided material support as gender roles within society, at that time, were structured patriarchally. At the centre of the family system were my brother and I and we were cared for primarily by my mother. Again I was constructed into a nuclear family model with Eurocentric influence. (Ross & Savada; 1988).

In recent conversations with my mother she reports how she tried hard to maintain her marriage irrespective of my father's drinking and occasional womanising and simply ran out of energy by the early 1980s. My mother has never remarried preferring the safety and security of life alone. She retired in 1992 and started to become interested in local community work. In 1996 she became an advocate for people with mental health difficulties; in 2000 she became an advocate for children in care. Since 2004 my mother attends mental health panels reviewing appeals for those people compulsorily admitted to hospital. Also in this role she is called to inspect psychiatric hospitals. My mother is also a local parish councillor.

5. *My Childhood*

In discussing my first years of life with my mother she reported a relatively happy time in her relationship with my father. I was breast fed for the first 8 months and my father was supportive of my mother. I was able to internalise, at this age, a protective father figure. For me my circumstances deteriorated when I was sent to a private school. I struggled due to my own dyslexia but also because of the difficulties I was having at home. A cycle developed where I involved myself in negative attention seeking behaviour at school that resulted in physical discipline and conflict at home. This cycle continued and worsened as my mother and father's relationship deteriorated.

In my early teenage years my father and I regularly disagreed, argued and on occasion fought. I was unable to identify with my father in adolescence as I had become competitive, defensive, oppositional and aggressive. He could not understand my rebellion and why I was throwing away an education he was paying for. I now know that the intensity of my rebellion was an indication of my need for closeness to my father.

Interestingly, my brother had an alternative and more productive coping mechanism, where he focused on his education becoming a 'straight A' student and head boy.

6. *My Adulthood*

Following my parents' divorce I saw my father twice in the next twelve years. I had split off everything that was bad about my parents' relationship and my childhood and projected it into my father where I was happy for it to remain whilst idealising my mother which I now recognise as '*a quasi-paternal bond of substitution*'. (Barrett: 1993).

Once I started studying social work which, by its nature, encourages you to consider and reflect on your own family experience, I started to reassess my relationship with my father. My studies allowed me to start the process of repairing the relationship and my own emotional state. I began to empathise with my father's childhood experiences, coupled with my own maturation, felt equipped emotionally to reunify with my father. Simply, I did not want to hold on to such anger or negativity any longer. Tentatively, I reintroduced my father back into my life and since the late 1990s we have resolved many of our difficulties although some subjects have not been spoken of. My father has just had his seventy sixth birthday. I would now describe our relationship as supportive, loving and truthful.

We see each other at least twice a month. I have recently become, at my father's request, legal guardian to my step mother who has dementia. We now both recognise my father is an important part of my life and vice versa.

7. What Has This To Do With The Research?

I embarked on this research conscious that my memories and subsequent constructions of fathers would influence this research. It is clear that my father has remained very present in my mind.

My choice of profession, (conscious and unconscious), has provided me with a platform to explore my relationship with my father whilst evolving into an interest in including non-resident, abusive, absent or simply excluded fathers into the lives of their children.

Although not unique these experiences have shaped my perspective, in terms of the research in the following ways:

- *I projected the image of a distant / absent yet powerful image of man into my concept of fathers.*
- *I disliked and easily accepted and supported the negative image of marginalised fathers and I failed to see the value of fathers.*

8. Background to the Project; The Professional and Academic Context of the Research and Reflexive Considerations

I have been a social worker since 1998. During my undergraduate studies, (1993 – 6), I volunteered as an advocate for people with mental health problems who were subject to long-stay psychiatric hospitalisation. My role was to advocate and support inpatients, (many of whom who had been institutionalised for forty years or more), as they were discharged into community accommodation. During one meeting, I met a male social worker who told me that; '*although social work was not what it was, if I really wanted to make a difference, I needed to qualify'*. About the same time, I was reading a great deal of political philosophy and was particularly attracted to the work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau especially his treaty; 'The Social Contract' (1762).

I was enamoured by his concepts of collective responsibility, the 'academic and experiential' led me to study for a postgraduate Diploma in Social Work (1996-1998). Once qualified, I worked in south London in an initial response children and families team from 1998 to 2000. In 1999 I completed an MSc in Social Work; my research looked at factors that promoted stability and instability for children in foster care in my employing borough.

In 2000 I moved to a central London local authority where I worked for two years in a long term child protection team. In 2002 I transferred to a deputy team manager's post in a children with disabilities team in a neighbouring authority. Six months later I moved to a long term child protection team as the deputy manager but I was asked very quickly to take on the team management function. I stayed in this role for fourteen months. Throughout this time, working in the field of child protection, my construction of 'the father' was reinforced by my professional experiences i.e. I

experienced and maintained a prejudice of fathers as abusive, absent and without value to children.

I had always been interested in international social work and had made contacts with a number of international organisations in an attempt to be considered for employment abroad. In February 2004 I was facilitating visitors from UNICEF from across Central Asia explaining concepts of western social work. Two weeks later I was offered a job, by one of those visitors, in Central Asia. By April 2004 I had moved to Kyrgyzstan. I then spent the next three years working for a number of different non-governmental organisations including UNICEF, the European Commission and EveryChild across the former Soviet Union. My role included: establishing social work systems and services, promoting family and community care, (rather than the institutionalisation of children), training police and social workers and developing social work undergraduate courses, investigating abuses of children in institutions, developing services and supports for children with disabilities and completing needs and strengths based area assessments. Throughout these international and cross cultural experiences I observed a similar behaviour by those working with children and families; i.e. that fathers were marginalised.

In late 2006 I returned to London, (and to a job as a team manager in a child protection team), to enrol on the Masters in Child Protection and Complex Case-work course at the Tavistock and Portman. This was a unique and life changing experience. Thoughts of my childhood and my early relationships with my father were re-awakened and have followed me throughout these the last eight years. As part of the first year of the course I had to undertake a twenty week child observation. I had made arrangements to observe a mother and her three week old child.

This observation had a powerful impact upon me emotionally. During the observations, I identified very strongly with the paternal function and at times felt a strong desire to substitute for the father in that function. On reflecting on my observations, I thought, felt and even acted in a paternal capacity to support the mother. The child observations left me wanting to explore further what was meant by paternal function and it incrementally influenced the rest of my studies. As part of the second year I chose to complete a clinical piece of work with a non-resident father and his son where I worked with them both on their relationship, issues of identity, (the boy was mixed heritage), and facilitated communication with the mother and father.

For my second year placement, I was placed in a Family Assessment Service which was a ‘tier four’ provision specialising in the assessment of children and families with complex child protection needs. I spent one day a week for a year assessing fathers who had emotionally, physically or sexually abused or neglected their child.

My thinking about fathers began to significantly influence my practice as a social worker and manager. I was continually asking questions in my own organisation about fathers and this led me to acknowledge my own historic and current

prejudicial views towards men in social work; '*always a suspicion that the male is an abuser or a perpetrator of violence or a predatory threat to women and children*'.

In 2008, in the final year of the course, I conducted a small piece of practitioner-research in my organisation entitled; '*How Are Men Thought About in Social Work Practice*'. I arranged two separate focus groups; one of male social workers and the other of female social workers and asked them the same questions about what they thought of men in social work. We discovered additional reasons why men are generally excluded from statutory child protection and child-in-need social work interventions.

The reasons for this exclusion included:

- Negative socially constructed images of men by a predominately female workforce. These images are continually reinforced with social workers experiencing men as abusive or absent or without value to the child and mother.
- Social workers' fear violent physical and or sexual attack.
- Social workers individual, (personal), experiences of abusive men
- Social workers hold deeply entrenched personal, individual, collective, social psychological defences towards men. (Whittaker: 2011).
- Institutional and organisational defences which encourage exclusion have become a professional and organisational culture where paternal alienation is perceived as legitimate, entrenched and endemic within organisational systems determining practice outcomes.
- A lack of organisational support for staff to engage abusive men.

I argue that this leaves a large percentage of children, allocated within Children's Social Care, without an adequate risk assessment of the father potentially leaving children and mothers vulnerable to abuse.

After completing the MA course, I still had the interest and motivation to continue to study. My original research established baseline information. Subsequently, and with the backing from my employing organisation, I was tasked with establishing a research project to develop new practices, procedures and systems to include men in social work practice within my employing Local Authority's statutory Children-in-Need Service. On reflection, my studies have incrementally informed my exploration. An opportunity presented itself; to establish a change management project and integrate the project into a professional doctorate. A research methodology was needed which would be able to provide a containing environment to explore the identified defensive thinking, behaviours and a strategy operationalised to bring about change. I was attracted to the family of Action Research most notably co-operative inquiry as I had written about its values in a paper after establishing a 'ThinkSpace' for social workers in 2008 and 2009. (Obholzer & Roberts; 2002).

Subsequently, I established a group of social workers and managers, who had the collective goal of improving social work practice in relation to including fathers. Our aim was to develop evidence based practice at the heart of a social work service. The research questions were formed by different perspectives from within the group as well as through supervision, coupled with O'Hagan's (1997) strategies of avoidance and Dienhart's (1998) gender sensitive approach as well as more globally relevant discourses.

9. Linking the Personal and the Professional with the Research

I had, (and still do), a real desire to explore and deconstruct my prejudicial views in an attempt to understand myself, my own practice and that of others as an aid to improve practice because, if I held these views, then I am sure so do many other social workers.

I recognise my research is driven by the need to understand and work with the stigma and shame attributed to men in the esoteric world of child protection. I further recognise that my research is driven by my need to repair my own relationship with my father but I also now recognise that I am trying to repair other relationships too. As a male social worker, working in the realm of male oppression, I became aware of my connection to male abuse, sharing masculinity with these male abusers, whilst being associated to those abusers in the minds of their victims and subsequently feeling 'dirty' and 'damaged' through that association. Over the course of my career I have had to understand and come to terms with the friction, stresses and unhappiness these circumstances have produced. I have questioned whether I could role model a different progressive form of masculinity, in an attempt at reparation as I wanted to support other men repair their relationships with children and families, [where safe]. (I further deconstruct my reasons for undertaking this research in Chapters 7 and 10.

I believe this research perspective is unique because; my childhood experiences although not exceptional led to a certain construction of 'the father' and it can be argued unconsciously influenced my career choice as a social worker (see previous paragraph). This is where I think my research and perspective becomes increasingly distinctive as a man working with male abuse in a predominately female profession. The rarity of my research perspective is further reinforced as a male student social worker studying the role of fathers at the Tavistock (as I set out above especially the learning from the mother and infant observation, the work with non-residential father and son and the assessment of the most violent and abusive fathers). The research perspective becomes exceptional when as a manager as well as a student social worker and man I, with others, attempt to improve the engagement of fathers in Children Social Care; the first known attempt at a project like this. I therefore believe these combinations within the context laid out make this research perspective unique.

I question whether my motivation to complete this research is in fact an attempt to become something different because by acknowledging what men do I dissociate myself and say I am different. Obviously, our gender is always with us and I enact my work as a social worker, manager, researcher and student in the context of my gender and vice versa. My research cannot escape the societal constructs of power and gender meaning this work will have different meanings to every reader. Subsequently, my gender can be found in every word of this thesis. (Frosh: 1994).

Therefore, in this study my professional and personal experience as a white middle-aged British male who has access to male hegemony, as a social worker, a student, as a teacher of social work and as a manager have inspired, encouraged and strongly shaped this research enquiry. Indeed, as a white male, with the category entitlements this affords, I believe I am in a position to comment on what it is like to be a man whilst exploring the presence and effects of masculinity in Children's Social Care. These roles also influence how I have interpreted the literature and research findings. I have made every effort to identify how my personal 'lenses' and my social and emotional construction have influenced the research in an attempt to recognize my bias, however I will never be fully aware. (Speer: 2005). I conclude that I was motivated to complete this research because of the influences of traditional masculine behaviours and constructions of; competition, narcissism, power and a need to impress my father. I was further motivated through my desire to continue to repair my relationship with my father as well as a desire to understand my own childhood. I was inspired to gain further insight into my own internal world and my understanding of what it means to be a man and a father. I was also motivated to gain greater insight into my sense of self as a leader and manager. These factors unconsciously influenced the research process whilst also making my research perspective exceptional.

To generate alternative perspectives I attended a monthly men's group for eighteen months. This experience left me knowing that there are many varieties of masculinity whilst providing me with an opportunity to learn and share other men's experiences and perspectives of their own masculinity. I also attended four days training on working with men. I interviewed my father and mother and discussed my assumptions in tutorials and psychoanalytical supervisions. I committed to these activities to learn more about myself in the role of a practitioner researcher researching men and male abuse. This raised my levels of consciousness about masculinity and power and allowed me further insight into my own motivations and behaviours. However, my influence remains a constant and has implications for the interpretation of the findings which is why I have presented my biography to the reader to assist others to see how and why I am interpreting the data in the way I am. I believe this can only contribute to methodological rigour and validity. I explore further my motivations and how they influenced the research outcomes in Chapters 7 and 10.

An example of my bias can be found in how I have theorized the problem in Chapter 2 which has influenced the way I have explored the problem. Sequentially the framework I have used to investigate the problem has influenced my rationalization.

I regularly refer to how I interpret the data and my bias and my perspectives which significantly influenced the entire research process. I have attributed the origins of behaviour and the roles I have chosen to a range of discourses that operate within our society. Reflexive analysis has allowed me to appreciate and respect the multiple meanings and realities conveyed in the research.

The co-operative inquiry group broadened my awareness but I have tried hard to remain open to my limitations. Regular supervision and group supervision over the last 3 years, has allowed for what Bannister describes as '*disciplined questioning*' over my research methodology and its limitations. (1996, p 50). Supervision has allowed for a continuous process of constructive criticism and deliberation over alternative interpretations and given me a number of other 'lenses' in which to review this research process. In order to encourage reflexivity I kept a diary throughout.

10. On completing the research I discovered:

We discussed, throughout the co-inquiry that paternal alienation is caused by a range of complex macro and micro variables. However, what I originally failed to take account of was the pervasive role of gender and power relations. As members of society, our individual social constructions of our gendered roles unconsciously determine social workers' and organisations' behaviour. I now realise this means fathers are excluded automatically and instinctively. The re-enactment of gendered identities, and thus power relations, was palpably present throughout the research.

The research brought about practice improvement. For example:

- *A 27% increase in fathers recorded on case file information*
- *I A 33% increase in the numbers of fathers' record in assessments and*
- *A 45% increase in fathers invited to attend meetings during the assessment phase.*

I conclude that fathers have been excluded from the social work task because: paternal alienation is a natural psychological and practical response to male abuse. Social work, over decades, has become blind to father involvement as a defence against fear of physical and sexual attack. Managers, local authorities' social services departments, Ofsted inspectors and academics have all colluded in silence, blind to the abuse caused by men. As a profession, we are not trained to work with fathers or abusers and we do not understand masculinity nor are we resourced to work with fathers. Meaning abusive men are not held to account, whilst abused women and children remain at risk, perpetuating the cycle of abuse and contributing to the continued marginalisation of fathers' and costing our society millions.

We determined that by using a participatory activity, such as co-operative inquiry, it is possible to create the conditions for a change in social work practice, indeed the

influence of the research methodology was crucial because it employs the traditions and principals and ethics of our profession. This research further confirms that to involve fathers we need to recognise and repeatedly and openly discuss how inequality, power and our individual social constructions influence our thinking. I further realise that there is a greater probability of achieving sustainable change if the culture that operates in the organisation supports emergent creativity whilst espousing staff cohesion simultaneously championing social work empowerment. I learned that the organisational history and current organisational culture has great bearing on the possible outcome of the project. I further concluded that my masculinity heavily influenced the research process and outcomes. Finally, I conclude that the theory of triangulation offers social workers and managers a connection between the personal, professional and managerial self that is highly relevant to our professional, organisational and personal lives.

We Learnt:

We learned that fathers can be included in social work assessments if there is a whole system and a participative approach which identifies how covert power and gender relations influence our behaviour in practice. As a profession we need to be open to learning collaboratively in developing practice. But to achieve greater father inclusion social workers' anxieties need to be contained and workers need to be given permission to be afraid and describe the fear preferably in quality reflective supervision. We further know that for fathers to be included senior managers in local authorities must support the activity in the long term, (ten to fifteen years), collect data and set targets over father inclusion. We further identified that local authorities' need to strategically commit and realign resources to meaningfully address domestic violence.

I have realised that organisations cannot be changed by plan or desire so I have studied emergence in complex systems which has allowed me to reflect on creativity and the conditions to foster emergence. Emergence can materialise in incomprehensible ways. (Stacey, Griffin & Shaw: 2006).

Conclusion

Reflexivity has encouraged me to provide the reader with a biography which I have then linked to the aims of the research. I recognise that the salient relationships of my childhood continue to influence my thinking and behaviour and in turn this thesis which I return to in Chapters 7 and 10. Chapter 2 reviews the literature.

Chapter 2: The Macro and Micro Theoretical Conceptual Perspectives to Understand Why Children's Social Care Needs to Include Fathers.

Chapter Two

1. *Introduction*

This Chapter is controversial and emotive. It is important to state from the outset that this Chapter does not set out to promote the rights of fathers' nor does it attempt to rationalise or deny male abuse, in fact quite the opposite. This Chapter is 'a call to action' evidencing the need to include men in the social work process to risk-assess them and hold them accountable for their behaviour. Where possible it may be conceivable to treat their violent and or abusive behaviour but a risk assessment may also indicate that separation and supervised contact is the only safe response. Fathers' involvement is only appropriate if it is in the child's interest and where it can be undertaken safely.

This Chapter provides a macro context exploring masculinity and fatherhood and relating the discussion to the more technical micro landscape of Children Social Care. I précis the changing nature of contemporary Western masculinity exploring concepts of hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities and reflect on the modern interpretation and perceptions of fatherhood in relation to the research inquiry. I investigate violence, particularly domestic abuse from these perspectives. I offer a comprehensive synthesis of existing research in order to produce objective overviews of why men are excluded from Children Social Care. In combination with realist social constructivism psychoanalytical thinking allows for a depth of exploration not permitted by other perspectives. Other theories considered as potential analytical perspectives for this Chapter were; the impact of the capitalism model of production, the Marxist (1904) counter-argument and Foucault's perspectives on power (2000, 1999, 1995 & 1980). However, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to consider every potentially relevant theory or examine every fact or hypothesis in exploring the research questions.

In Summary

I identify complex, hidden, unconscious and socially constructed reasons as to men's exclusion from Children's Social Care. In this Chapter I locate the first two research questions and the aims of the project within a professional 'terrain' identifying gaps in current practice:

1. How do we currently exclude fathers from social work practice?
2. Why have fathers been continually excluded from the social work task?

2. *Contemporary Masculinity*

Most modern societies are based on what Jones (1995) describes as a dominator model where difference (gender, ethnicity, age) becomes the signifier (or

categoriser) for advantage or disadvantage, for privilege or repression. Gender and gendered identities, gender stereotypes, sex appropriate standard roles, behavioural norms and assumptions about maleness and femaleness are then constructed within this socially constructed dominator model. As a result, one of the most problematic and enduring characteristics within human culture is the inequity and discrimination between men and women. (As Marx's labour theory denotes, society depends upon the replication of social structures to provide context and perpetuate culture). (Connell: 2002).

Masculinity is a symbolic script, a cultural construct, endlessly variable and, in contemporary society, not always necessary. Historically, femininity has been defined as the negative to masculinity although Frosh (1994) posits this means masculinity is, in actuality, a negative identity learnt by defining itself in opposition to emotionality and connectedness. This means masculinity has no secure base, no positive substance but is rather founded only on the prohibition of 'the other' a precarious and untenable position which is always under threat. Men are structurally dominant over women but individually men experience powerlessness and a denial of inner emptiness. In Western market-led countries, the traditional and somewhat restricted notions of masculinity and manhood, (and therefore natural dominance through rationality, pseudo-independence, physical strength, and traditional work based spheres of masculine expressive activities), has been fragmented by feminism and other cultural critiques due to a period of rapid cultural alteration. Men and masculinity can only be experienced in a 'bi-polar' construction of; self-hatred or idealisation, the good or the bad man. (Quite simply, the 'Ubiquitous Male defined by the triad Man-the-Impregnator-Protector-Provider', sexual universals and biological determination are no more). (Burk & Speed: 1995)

In spite of this, reserves of more primitive male thinking remain endemic and inherent dominating society in an increasing bid to defend against the loss of power. Men maintain control over political, economic, judicial, educational and medical systems.

These gender based patterns of power and control are persistently internalised and reproduced in our most intimate relationships through the generations. Jukes (1999) argues that control and power, and the abuse employed to acquire and maintain both, are part of a spectrum of abusive controls to ensure male domination and the provision of services and caretaking from women. The dehumanisation of the 'other' through abusive control is central acting as a 'frustration pre-emption' strategy. Despite our social revolution, femininity remains a subordinate and, on occasion, a denigrated state whilst patriarchy, Kraemer (1999) argues, impoverishes the male personality through its rigidity, emptiness and frailty. (Maguire: 2002).

As a result today, men and women concurrently conform yet simultaneously resist gender stereotypes. No longer are; 'masculine' and 'feminine' thought of as intrinsic polarities but as an overlapping continuum. Modernity has also brought with it a slight erosion of patriarchal power which, in turn, some argue has led to a crisis in masculinity and an escalating uncertainty and fragility in masculine identity through

what Maguire describes as 'womb envy'. (2004) Many men are unable to manage this continuum and fluidity in their identity and respond through violence, in particular, to women in order to maintain the 'illusory authority of the phallus'. (Seager and Thummel 2009, Maguire: 2009 Burk & Speed: 1995, Gilmore: 1990).

In Western market economies there is a powerful correlation between the social organisation of production and the dominance of the male image. The complexity of modern industrial society requires an aggressive gender male role. Indeed capitalism needs patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity. However, it remains the case that the assumptions on which contemporary conventional masculinity are built has become less tenable as women have become economically and socially empowered. (Seager and Thummel 2009).

This thesis conceptualises masculinity in plural and hierarchical terms with some masculinities being socially central and or more correlated with authority and social power over other subordinated non-hegemonic masculinities. Hegemonic masculinity has multiple meanings but it signifies a normative cultural dynamic by which men maintain a controlling position in society. Hegemonic masculinity is constructed and reconstructed to suit social change. Hegemonic masculinity is characterised through cultural consensus, marginalisation and dehumanisation of 'the other' or any competitor. (Stainistreet *et al*; 2010 and Smithgail et al: 2009).

Connell & Messersschmidt (2005) propose a model of hegemonic masculinity which is based on privilege and power and emphasises the agency of women whilst explicitly identifies the 'geography' of masculinity through local, national and global constructs, socio-cultural circumstance and structure. This hegemonic and multiple masculinity model encompasses a range of dynamics including the interplay between power and gender dynamics which interplays with ethnicity, class and region. These dynamics determine the nature of masculinity its form, local context and impact meaning masculinity is a learnt social practice.

Depending on perspectives there is a misperception as to who is a hegemonic male. Hegemonic masculinity is not a fixed model. In Connell & Messersschmidt's (2005) model they suggest the existence of external and internal hegemonic masculinities. External refers to the institutionalisation of men's dominance over women whilst internal refers to the social ascendancy of one group of men over another. Hegemonic masculinity is fluid amalgamating, negotiating, translating and reconfiguring masculinities to maintain external masculine hegemony.

This brings us to hegemonic masculinities. Ethnographic investigation substantiates that there are idiosyncratic gendered cultures. Each life history survey uncovers inimitable trajectories of men's lives and each structural analysis delineates original connections of race, class, gender and generation. This means it is possible to describe a thousand and one variants of masculinity. Extrapolating this point further; structured relations amongst masculinities exist in all local settings with motivation to influence a specific hegemonic version varying by local context.

Men, in their desire to be hegemonic position themselves between some or all of these masculinities. The existence of multiple masculinities evidences the complexities of gender construction for men as well as the existence of active struggle for dominance that is implicit in the Gramscian, (Connell: 1977), concept of hegemony. A further component of this complexity is that gender is constructed from one's individual structural circumstance. (Stainistreet *et al*; 2010 Smithgail et al: 2009 and Connell and Messerschmidt; 2005)

Despite much change hegemonic masculinity remains omnipresent and so one has to ask; what crisis in masculinity? I concur with Jukes (1999) who regards talk of a crisis in masculinity as an attack on feminism. Men and women's psychological development reflect [differently] the patriarchal culture in which we live. Eichenbaum and Orbach (1983) argue this means that women are left incomplete, powerless, over-dependent, passive and without a solid sense of self and separateness. This is reinforced through patriarchal cultural domination and so women become 'comrades in their captivity'. (Maguire: 2002).

Radical feminism locates masculinity as, by its nature, oppressive and either needed to be fought against or avoided through separation. (This is a powerful argument. I believe this radical feminist perspective operates legitimately yet silently in Children's Social Care as an overt reaction to the atrocities of male abuse through the solidarity of women and a resistance to the dependence on men that stifles women's potential).

But are all men really complicit? Seager and Thummel (2009) and Frosh (1994) and others describe '*versions of masculinities or multiple masculinities*' rather than man being categorised as homogeneous. These versions of masculinity are constricted to a polarity of either 'properly' masculine or feminine and widespread due to the intergenerational transmission of gender codes. Frosh (1994) convincingly argues that masculinity is fundamentally a negative identity structured by a range of ethnic, class and cultural experiences and fantasies. Frosh continues that masculinity is understood only by splitting off intellect from emotional literacy and connectedness with 'the other' which are then both repressed.

What are these other masculinities? Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) and others (Stainistreet *et al*; 2010 Smithgail et al: 2009) have identified '*complicit masculinity*' which describes how the majority of men, (white, middle class, heterosexual, moneyed, professional and older), benefit from the gender divide by dominating, for instance, younger men and men from minority or disempowered ethnic groups and low income men. '*Subordinated masculinity*' denotes those men who are denied access to masculine hegemony for example homosexual men. Hegemonic and subordinated masculinity are defined in their polar opposition. '*Marginalised masculinities*' refers to the relations between men in hegemonic and subordinated groups with non-hegemonic patterns of masculinity representing well developed responses to race and class.

Exploring non-hegemonic masculinity further; academics such as Connell (1995) and Whitehead (2005) have developed this concept by supporting the notion of a '*protest masculinity*' which exists and operates within the definition of marginalised masculinity. Protest masculinity selects themes within hegemonic masculinity and then redefines them from the perspective of poverty and other oppressions. Protest masculinity incorporates the local constructions of working class settings and the structured position of younger and ethnically marginalised males who lack the economic resources and institutional authority that provides the foundations of regional and global hegemonic power. This means the most powerful men within the marginalised group dominate over other less powerful men by exaggerating and 'overcompensating' masculine behaviours such as violence and risk taking. Messerschmidt (2000) describes this as '*oppositional masculinity*'.

Unemployment, racism and class and limited or no skills restricts access to hegemonic masculinity and the associated dominate image of masculinity. Marginalised men especially younger men, who do not have access to the labour market, need to locate alternative avenues for status and success. They go about this by creating new masculine identities such as 'a street masculinity' based on social nonconformity such as crime and violence and or through affirmation of a male identity based upon the extent and frequency of heterosexual experience.

This is reinforced by Home Office crime statistics which evidences that crime is predominately a male activity. There were 2.2 million offenders found guilty or cautioned in 2013. Of these fourth fifths were men. Men are particularly associated with serious and violent crime. (ONS: 2014, 2012, 2011 & 2001). Marginalise men lack 'positional power' with limited or no leverage within the labour market. Indeed Messerchmidt (2000) proposes that crime is a resource men turn to when they lack the necessary resources to achieve hegemonic masculinity. Marginalised men construct their own hegemonic version through illegitimate means or through violence subordinating others who are less successful in their criminal endeavours. Therefore the social circumstance in which men become men is a quintessential element as to the nature of their masculinities and how those masculinities are expressed for instance through risk taking or self destructive behaviours. (Whitehead: 2005 & Newburn and Mair: 1996). Subsequently some younger marginalised men undertake alternative strategies such as gang, crime and risk taking behaviours to create masculine identities as well as a strategy to create solidarity between marginalised groups (Connell: 1998). Connell goes on to argue that constructions of masculinity amongst marginalised men are limited i.e. that behaviours follow an agreed 'code' with penalties for breaking this code. For example; drug dealing provides male status and money but further marginalises from traditional income generation whilst inviting state intervention. Indeed Stainistreet *et al* (2010) suggests that crime can quickly become a type of work allowing the state to take over as the authority against which men define their masculinity.

In relation to this thesis men, whose identity and self-esteem is weakened through their subordination, have the greatest motivation to use alternative strategies such

as risk taking, group-identification and violence. Messershmidt (2000) describes this as a display of oppositional masculinities as an aim to secede from hegemonic masculinity. Therefore crime can be labelled as a form of oppositional masculinity to reaffirm their masculinity. This social construction amongst marginalised men is noteworthy in relation to this thesis because it is marginalised men who are often those involved with the child protection system often because of domestic abuse or other expressions of protest and opposition within a model of marginalised masculinity. (Smithgall et al: 2009).

Men are socialised not to discuss their emotions or show vulnerability. Men are perceived through action and as problem solvers. Conversely, men deny their femininity yet envy women simultaneously denigrating and idealising them. Clandestinely, societal pressure prevents men identifying or discussing their vulnerabilities which they split off and locate elsewhere. In relation to the research question this means that there exists a traditional and separate masculine communication style. (Maquire: 2009).

As a result, there is a powerful argument that suggests that all men are implicated in the processes of abuse. Although, this discounts the possibility that men can change, it is clear that all men have an investment in the status quo. (Eichenbaum & Orbach: 1983). Despite this, we are living through a critical moment in the changing patterns of male – female relations. Some men are unable to adapt to what they perceive as a loss of paternal authority and the identified fragility in their masculinity and react by dehumanising 'the other'. Unable to manage primitive anxieties, (about a wish to be mothers or indeed babies), together with fearing the loss of all psychic boundaries results in many men acting defensively and violently. Frosh (1994) also links abusiveness with patterns of the sexual socialisation of men. There becomes a need to defend against increased uncertainty attempting to control their dependency through gender rigidity, racism, obsessional behaviours, narcissistic rage and violence. (Maguire: 2009).

As contemporary society continues to morph; masculinity and femininity will, in turn, continue to overlap meaning the continuum between the two will become increasingly complex. As many sociological models of masculinity and fatherhood suggest masculinity [and therefore femininity] is a fluid, continuously shifting and developing identity reconciling to the changing demands of modern Western capitalist societies. (Marsiglio; 1999). This fluidity leads to varied expectations about men and their roles and allows for a counter, more constructive, line of reasoning which is convincingly argued by Maguire (2009) and others. Some academics argue that opportunities exist for contemporary masculinity to adapt to this social, sexual and Cultural Revolution and enrich the quality of modern family life. This can be achieved through;

- fewer children
- increased leisure time
- the prospect to augment paternal involvement in the early stages of child-rearing

- to understand rather than discipline and
- to greatly contribute to the healthy development of children and the maintenance of adult intimate relationships. (2009) Frosh (1995), Kraemer (1995) and Lau (1995).

3. Contemporary Fatherhood

Current political, social, technological and cultural change to masculinity in the UK has its roots in women working during the Second World War, the sexual revolution of the 1960s, changes in the divorce laws of the 1970s and the transformation of the industrial landscape following the decline of traditional manufacturing in the 1970s and early 1980s, (with the subsidiary and unforeseen perceived 'attack' on centuries' old working class masculine roles). Other contributory factors to social change included: changes in post war housing and welfare benefit policies, immigration, the influence of other cultures, the gay liberation movement, alternative forms of family and parenting models, modern contraception and fertilisation and the rise of individualism which has, in succession, contributed to the decline in the nuclear family and consequently a rise in lone parent families and non-residential fathers.

The data confirms British society's transformation. The Office of National Statistics (ONS) report that in 2009; 78% of all children were cared for by both parents in the same household, (down from 92% in 1971). In 2009, 68% of mothers worked, (27% full time), in comparison to 91% of fathers who work an average week of 46.1 hours. In 2009 40% of children were born outside of marriage and 22% of all UK households were headed by a single parent, (a 300% increase since 1971). Statistically, the father is much more likely to leave the family home following a relationship breakdown. Importantly, in relation to the negative societal perception of fathers, the ONS evidences that the majority of fathers maintain regular contact with their children following separation. Blackwell and Dawe (2003) estimate 10% of children will lose touch entirely with their father. (Asmussesn & Weizel: 2009).

These changes in the demographic profile of the family, together with advancements in women's participation in politics, the arts and marked changes in the labour market have intensified interest in how this affects the wellbeing of children and has led, to what Furstenberg (1995) describes as, an increased interest and emphasis on the role of men in family life. (ONS: 2014 & 2012, 2009, OECD 2013 and Featherstone et al 2010, 2007 & 2001).

These demographic changes indicate that the relationship between men and women has changed especially in relation to marriage and child rearing. There have been important changes to the definition of the modern family. This has occurred through the impact of modernity, capitalism, the empowerment of women and the influence of immigration with cultural and multi-cultural differences in the definition of family, alternative parenting styles and values. As well as changes in the way we live our lives individualism has become a central premise in our social development. The nature of relationships especially intimate relationships has changed as women have become more economically and socially independent which has led to changes in

parental relationships with children as we now think of the child-parent dyad rather than the couple-child triangle. Parton (2006) identified a range of research literature that vividly demonstrates the increasing diversity and ephemerality of family structure and family life in Britain from the 1950s to the present day. New terms such as re-partnering, reformed families and social parenting are becoming common place and are based on what Ferri *et al* (2003) identifies as; '*many of these changes are a result of the extent to which they are rooted in the changing position of women'*. (p.302).

This change in the position of women means we are currently rethinking the definition of family. Commentators such as Giddens (2009, 1991 & 1990) suggest that changing patterns and relationships in families now means our focus is on 'partnerships' especially in parenting as marriage and parenthood are now no-longer coterminous. Moreover and 'in chorus' has been the influence of other cultures' attitudes and constructs of family and parenting. Subsequently the concept of the nuclear heterosexual family is becoming increasingly outmoded in modern Britain.

Indeed Giddens (2009) contends that we live in a world where personal relationships of friendships, partnerships and or sexual intimacy act as the mechanisms of steadying social ties instead of kinship. Late modern society is now characterised by; heightened choice, originating both from the opportunities of capitalism coupled with the flexibility of work, a continual questioning of conventional beliefs and certainties, an augmented sense of reflexivity and '*an absence of embedded biography and life trajectory and an increased confrontation with the plurality of the social world*' coupled with changing beliefs as we now live in high opportunity and high risk society. (p57). Parton (2006) adds to this that there is also an increase in social anxiety as self-identity is now complicated by individualism. It is now the case that our world, our roles and our employment and even our family are more uncertain than ever before. (Giddens; 2009 and Parton: 2006).

In Summary

Drawing together these hypotheses over the changes to the nature of family to the research aims and objectives it is important to note that these changes in society and family have had a significant impact on the nature of social work practice which has had to develop theories of intervention which takes account of these new definitions and reformations.

Subsequently men's position in the family and or parental role has transformed due what Allen (2011) describes as the '*social reorganisation of parenthood*'. There are now new expectations and pressures on fathers as they adopt the dual role of breadwinner and parent with an expectation fathers spend more and meaningful time with their children. Consecutively, this has led to calls for governmental policies to support a better work life balance for fathers, increased paid paternity leave, and support to low income families and an increase in parental support to fathers.

Successively, over the last fifteen years, Government policy has attempted to ensure that fathers remain responsible for their children. Research indicates that fathers are adapting and, in 2009, it was calculated that fathers in the UK, USA, Germany and Canada had increased their daily contact with their children from fifteen minutes in 1975 to two hours per day by 2008. (Asmussesn & Weizel: 2009). However, these authors fail to acknowledge the impact of oppression, racism, class and low income when analysing fathers' participation in their children's lives.

Academics agree that the role of the contemporary father is ecologically adaptive and affected by numerous interrelated systems functioning at different levels in the life course. I thought of Di Carlo and Ganara's (2002: 65) definition of paternal function; '*to supply and protect the mother-infant relationship*'. Contemporary fathering is multiply determined by contextual influences and best understood within the context of the wider family system. This multiplicity and contextual complexity has led to contemporary men concerned that they are being marginalised from family life. Alternatively, other academics argue that this multiplicity and complexity has allowed many men to evade their responsibilities for their children and for their abuse. (Jones: 2011).

A great deal has been discovered about child development over the last fifty years. It is now recognised that, in most cases, child centred and sensitive care giving by both parents through complimentary parenting, (where parents agree role differentiation), contributes to a wide variety of positive child outcomes. (Allen: 2011, Field: 2010, Hauari & Hollingworth: 2009, Lamb and Tamis-Lemonda: 2004). Likewise there is a wealth of international research which evidences that fathers provide not only a symbolic function but a unique contribution to positive developmental outcomes for children across cultures and ethnicities. For example; fathers' build on ego development and support the process of separation-individuation. (Folaron, Bai & Schneider: 2011, Jones: 2011, Burgess: 2010, Field: 2010, Asmussen & Weizel: 2009, Hauari & Hollingworth: 2009, Rosenberg & Wilcox: 2006, Lamb: 2004). As Popenoe states; '*Involved fathers bring positive benefits to their children that no other person is as likely to bring*'. (1996) 163.

Fathers and father figures shape child health and wellbeing There is growing evidence to indicate fathers play a vital role in early childhood development. (Ball, Moselle & Pedersen: 2007, Allen and Daly: 2007 and Lewis & Lamb: 2007).

Sarkadi *et al*'s (2008) systemic review of 18 studies evidences that father involvement undeniably influences psychological, behavioural, social and cognitive outcomes in children. More explicitly; increased quantities of father involvement is associated with: better cognitive and social competence, augmented capacity for social responsibility and empathy, positive self-esteem, constructive relations with siblings and better educational outcomes. Contemporary literature such as Goodwin and Styron (2012) demonstrate that fathers who display positive engagement with their children such as accessibility and responsibility to participate positively impact on: improved psychological and emotional regulation, social maturity and life skills as well as more constructive child / adolescent father relationships. Lam, McHale and

Crouter's (2012) research confirms that fathers play a distinct [i.e. different to mothers], and essential role in children's socialisation.

Most of the research undertaken on the impact on fathering has concentrated on the implications for child and adolescent mental health with persuasive evidence to indicate that fathering has important protective and constructive influence on the mental health of children amongst assorted ages and phases of development. Remaining warm and supportive, concerned, occupied and engaged with the child are among fathering characteristics that have been shown to constructively impact on a child's mental health. Reeb & Conger (2011), Sarkadi, Kristiansson, Oberklaid, Bremberg. (2008) and Flouri & Buchanan (2003).

Research such as Bronte-Tinkew, Moore and Carrano (2006), which is particular to fathers, signifies their influence on preventing the misuse of alcohol and illicit drug use in children and adolescents may be separate and different and hold greater sway than that of mothers. Supplementary research denotes that within dual parenting families' fathers play a noteworthy caring and shielding influence on their child's risk of having attempted alcohol, cigarettes and marijuana. (Hemovich, Lac & Crano (2011).

Research, for example Martin *et al* (2010) and Welsh *et al* (2004) further signifies that positive fathering has a noteworthy influence on school preparedness, academic performance as well as educational outcomes and therefore far reaching associations across the developmental spectrum into adulthood. Wilson & Prior's (2011) literature review found that constructive fathering added and encouraged: less school adjustment difficulties, improved academic advancement, increased access to higher and further education with subsequent enhanced occupational attainments in adulthood.

Research on fathers, in dual parenting relationships, indicates they have a pivotal role in managing the risk of bullying as well as other external risks such as exploitation. (Hong, & Espelage 2012, Bowes 2009, and Flouri & Buchanan; 2003). Constructive fathering also acts as a protective influence against delinquency and anti-social behaviour. (Cobb-Clark & Tekin; 2011 and Coley & Menderios: 2007)

It is critical for those working with families, and fathers in particular, to be aware of this fact. No matter what economic, cultural or social pressures exist, there is overwhelming agreement that, men should be more involved with their children as there is convincing evidence to state that men, who have children's best interests in mind, are imperative for healthy child development. (Goodwin & Styron: 2012 & Target & Fonagy: 2002). Conversely, research overwhelmingly substantiates that men are not provided with the educative and social supports to assume this role. (Featherstone et al; 2010 & 2007, Laming; 2009, Kraemer: 2000, NSPCC; 2006, Burk & Speed: 1995).

The key determinants of father involvement are; the father's motivation to want to participate as a parent and his ability to adapt to changing family, environmental,

social and ecological demands. Crucially, (and significantly relevant in the context of this research), the primary determinate of father involvement with his children is the quality of the relationship the father has with the children's mother and whether they can develop 'a co-parenting alliance'. Fathers need to be encouraged to nurture and spend time with children.

Fathers need a supportive ecology to develop self-confidence which is positively reinforced from social supports within the extended family system and supported within the work place and wider society. Father involvement can be encouraged if fathers are supported to manage the emotional transition into fatherhood and if employment can be integrated within parenting. Father involvement is further possible where fathers can build relationships within community systems and where fathers can work with other fathers. (Field: 2010, Amussen & Weizel: 2009, Hauari & Hollingworth: 2009, Rosenberg & Wilcox: 2006, Lamb & Tamis-Lemonda: 2004).

There is little research on the link between fathers and child maltreatment. What is known is that fathers are directly involved in 36.8% of maltreatment cases in the United States, that children living in single parent households tend to be at greater propensity of abuse and unrelated male figures and step-fathers in households tend to be more abusive. The probability of child maltreatment, neglect and sexual abuse appreciably decreases when fathers take significant responsibility for the basic care of their children from an early age. Consequently, research clearly indicates that children who live with their biological father in a married household are significantly less likely to be neglected, physically or sexually abused or maltreated. Child abuse is more likely where fathers, (like mothers), are non-resident, unemployed or have poor organisation of parenting roles. (Goldman & Salus: 2003).

Child abuse is further associated with fathers who suffer mental health problems or are associated with drug and alcohol misuse or domestic violence or where there is on-going parental discord and where the relationship with the children's mother is poor. It is these men exhibiting these determinants that are less likely to be involved with their children. Unsurprisingly, research indicates that vulnerable children appear to be in the most need of constructive, affirming and helpful relationships with their fathers. (Burges: 2010). In turn, children who are raised in father absent homes are significantly more likely to do poorly on almost any measure of child wellbeing. (Allen: 2011, Hahn: 2011).

4. Evolving UK Legislation and Social Policy

Over the last decade legislation and policy has evolved to meet these sociological and demographic changes. Cross party governments have attempted to; extend economic citizenship rights to women in turn reducing the impact of child poverty by attempting to decrease father absence and increase parental responsibility. Legislative and government policies have promoted greater equality between genders within the workforce and improved children's wellbeing all to encourage father involvement. (Asmussen & Weizel: 2010 & Finch: 2005). For example: the Children Act 2004 requires local authorities to identify vulnerable fathers. The

National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services (2004) requires Children's Services to consult and systematically engage with fathers. The Equality Act (2010) requires providers of services to publish a plan for promoting a gender equality plan, to review the impact of services for men and women, gather information on services and demonstrate how the needs of men and women are met by these services. (Station Office).

Simultaneously, there have been numerous new policy initiatives for Children's Services to include fathers. All have attempted to redress the '*social reorganisation of parenthood*' by broadening and emphasising men's involvement in child care, whilst maintaining men's position as economic provider and introducing increasingly severe penalties for those men who fall outside of the mainstream i.e. marginalised men. (Allen: 2011).

The primary role of UK policy for non-residential fathers has been focused on fathers fulfilling their financial obligations to care for their children. In more recent years, governments have recognised the important contribution and benefits of father involvement. Despite these legal and policy changes, and the fundamental changes to the nature and form of the family, and the emergence of alternative forms of parenting (e.g. co-parenting), the British Welfare state remains built upon the traditional gender differentiated model of family life. Women are still expected to care for children whilst depending on men to act as the main breadwinner. However, successive British welfare policy has discouraged fathers' involvement in family life; for example; there was no automatic obligation through parental responsibility until 2003. Frank Field's report (2010) argued that the UK tax and benefit system was a disincentive for low income parents marrying or co-habiting because the system of benefits, child maintenance and tax credits only recognises one parent as eligible for financial support and work incentives irrespective of the parents circumstances. Field argued, (echoing a similar line of reasoning as the Finer report thirty six years previously), that the UK benefit system has led to many low income parents being financially better off by living separately. Data indicates that the provision of benefits, in this way, has increased the numbers of children being raised without a committed father in the home. (Field 2010 & CIVITAS: 2002).

Field (2010) and others substantiate that men and women adapt their family circumstances to take advantage of the tax and benefit structure which paradoxically subsidises the choice to be a lone parent by encouraging parents to maintain separate residencies leading to mothers' and children's isolation from the father. This isolation is further compounded by marriage being penalised through '*external financial disincentives by successive governments*' welfare policies. (Hauari & Hollingworth: 2009: 54).

Demographic changes and the mass mobilisation of women in the labour market have led to demands for a re-evaluation of welfare state policy. There have been on-going calls to redesign benefit entitlements so there is a fair and equitable universal benefit system which would, post-separation, advance shared parenting agreements through joint assessment, (in line with the Australian and Scandinavia models).

At the same time academics like Connell (2002) claim that society has become alienated from paternity as, (as already reported in this thesis), there now exists a well-entrenched negative group identity and set of discourses and sub categories, (multiple masculinities), of men operating in the media and throughout our society. These images, discourses and categories are continually reinforced directly by the media and indirectly by unfavourable socially organised conditions such as racism, poverty and class. Academics, such as Furstenberg (1999), posit that society is continually subjected to a dichotomy as the public have been inundated by competing and coexisting media messages of fatherhood as either good (nurturing) or bad (violent, abusive and absent). Parent et al (2007) suggests that a culture denigrating the marginalised forms of masculinity, (Black, ethnic minority and working class fathers), has now been institutionalized, prohibiting some men's involvement in their children's lives.

The milieu is further complicated through images of step-fathers and 'the boyfriend of the mother' which remain culturally ill-defined. This view is confirmed by Rivett's (2010) theoretical analysis which highlights how society has constructed masculinity in a way which '*privileges a deficit model of male parenting*' particularly Black, ethnic minority and working class fathers and men (p 21). Social workers within Children's Social Care are then continually confronted by this deficit model of marginalised men.

5. Concluding the Macro Theoretical and Conceptual Perspective

Hegemonic and multiple masculinities, like fatherhood, is in a state of flux through on-going redefinition caused by contemporary society and the capitalist model of production. Systems, institutions and our collective psychology has simply not kept pace with societal change meaning men are 'split' into the 'good' new father or the 'bad', marginalised absent abusive father. I believe this polarity to be defensive and dangerous and advocate for a debate that considers men as both good and bad.

I believe an opportunity exists for men to take up a greater role in their care of their children whilst contributing more equally to the maintenance of their adult relationships which, in turn, will engender a more harmonious society. However there is a darker side, as many men fight against these changes through the persecution of women. Domestic abuse affects many adults and children whilst men's fear of marginalisation causes this abuse and their responsibility for their abuse goes unaddressed. Historically, social work, in particular Children's Social Care, bears witness to the darker side of masculinity unable to see the opportunity for children to be involved with their fathers. Social work has to continually develop practices to adjust to the fluidity of shifting family and parenting models whilst needing to continually interpret the shifting phizog of hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinity.

The rest of this Chapter applies these perspectives to Children's Social Care.

6. Micro Theoretical and Conceptual Perspectives to Understand why Children's Social Care Need to Include Fathers

I now apply the macro theoretical concepts to substantiate that, in social work systems across the Western world, fathers particularly those identified as marginalised, are excluded. The wider historical, sociological, economic and structural reasons which threaten the traditional notion of masculinity powerfully 'play out' within Children's Social Care. Applying Connell's (2002) theoretical claims to social work, I argue here that, the profession has not had insight into this 'alienation from paternity and marginalised masculinity'. I evidence here that; we have over identified with mothers by allowing a negative group identity and set of negative pathologies, discourses and sub-categories to gain cultural and practical significance in social work. This has happened because of the complexities of modernity. 'Paternal alienation' suggests that abusive men are not held accountable for their behaviour. There are now increasing calls to change entrenched behaviours, systems and practices to enable and support social workers to assess the risks and strengths of fathers. This Chapter goes on to explore, in technical detail, how current social work practice is affected by the constructions of masculinity operating in Children's Social Care whilst investigating the impact of violence on the social work system.

7. Social Work in a Modern Age

Ashley et al (2011, 2008 and 2006) argue that over the past twenty years the shifting political climate has led to significant changes in social policy which, in turn, has led to a process of continuous change in Children's Social Care's departments' structures, policies and procedures. This is coupled with a dramatic redefinition in the social work task over a similar timescale. There has been an increased emphasis on procedure, investigation and risk assessment and an equivalent de-escalation in preventative work. (Parton: 2006).

The current emphasis on service is ensconced in principles such as 'needs-led', 'participative' and 'choice', denying the reality of diminishing resources and increases in child poverty. Cooper et al; (2003) posit that the controlling factor, resources, have led to an inward looking, risk averse, crisis based and anti-prevention service provision. The recent recommendations of Professor Munro, (2011) may encourage some change. With rapid change in the definition and complexity of the modern family together with financial rationalisation, there is little surprise that the social work task, exponentially, has become increasingly complex and has not been conducive to either family centred practice or the assessment of fathers. Ashley et al: (2011), points out that the duality of social work roles (investigator / supporter) causes confusion, conflict and perpetuates the threat of violence.

8. Gender Bias and Paternal Alienation or Simply Pragmatic Practice?

Social workers, like every other member of society are socially constructed whilst influenced and inundated by examples of the deficit model of male parenting and behaviours associated with marginalised masculinity which is reinforced each day through social work experience.

There is insurmountable evidence, from across the United States, Australia, Ireland, New Zealand and Canada, as well as the UK, to state that social work is ideologically and structurally resourced and practically geared to support women through mother and child centred practice. There is minimal, if any, social work being undertaken with men in the context of their children and couple relationships. Research literature clearly indicates that Children's Social Care and social workers are not organised, supported, resourced, trained or encouraged to intervene with fathers in any meaningful way. (Folaron, Bai & Schneider: 2011, Ashley et al: 2011, Smithgall: 2009, Swann: 2009, Ashley et al: 2008, Strega et al: 2008, Rosenberg & Wilcox: 2006, Ashley et al: 2006, Mouzos & Makkai: 2009, O'Hagan 1997).

The American Humane Association's (2011 & 2006) collection of research from across the USA, Strega et al's (2008) and Mouzos and Makkai's (2009) research in Canada and Ashley et al's (2011) research in the UK, (supporting Farmer and Owen's 1998 research), all substantiate that a deficit model of male parenting and the marginalisation of masculinity pervades the child protection system. Even though child protection registrations indicate approximately equivalent numbers of men and women are considered as the perpetrator of child abuse, women are repeatedly offered supportive interventions whilst men are denied access to services and their children. (Ashley et al: 2006)

One convincing theoretical perspective that may explain the structural and practical predisposition of services to mothers and children is the 'over / idealisation and glorification' of motherhood. Through maternal transference, we all possess highly valued powerful, traditional and sentimental social stereotypes of the gentle and nurturing woman and mother. Indeed, motherhood, child birth and child rearing have attached importance and are cherished in the majority of traditional cultures. This has contributed to state systems and institutions being mother centric. However, mother centric practice and service provision fails to take account of the diversity of family life within contemporary times. (Although it is important to note that in the UK today a range of fatherhood and parenting models are present in our society and not all will be conducive to productive involvement with social workers). (Maquire: 2004, Lau: 1995, Kraemer: 1995).

A further consequence of this idealisation is that our society denies that some women use the opportunity and privilege of motherhood for maternal incest, and cruel and abusive actions. Applying Welldon (2008) and Motz (2004) views, social workers, like all of us, project onto women fantasized and naturalised images of motherhood making the identification of abusive behaviours and perverse motherhood problematic. However, this idealisation is limited and with unresolved

concerns about child maltreatment, James' (2011) contests, comes a tendency to blame mothers for children's circumstances whilst underestimating or completely disregarding the contribution of the father. Jukes (1999) argues the idealisation of motherhood is dangerous as it promotes abuse.

There is a need to be pragmatic within this already complex picture. The debate about fathering tends to be easily polarised. On the one hand; '*men are not so good so let's get on without them*', (an exponential and self-fulfilling experience in children and family social work), on the other without fathers active and equal involvement in the family, the family, as we know it, faces extinction.

The reality is that men are able to demonstrate kindness, affection and care of infants as well as older children but there are prevailing dominant emotional and social forces that prevent men from articulating their feelings. (Kraemer: 1995). The majority of mothers see their parental role as their primary and lead role. Kullberg (2005) explains this cognitive yet rationale bias is evident within social work's pursuit of traditional gender stereotypes that places male identity within the labour market and subsequently fails to regard men as a resource in child protection. As a society we need to encourage and support fathers, as we do with mothers, to see that their parental role is their primary role. (Asumussen & Weizel: 2010).

Fathers can be difficult to identify and locate although Reynolds (2011) argues that it is possible to identify and engage a large proportion of fathers with the correct training, resources and motivation. A crucial interrelated feature in the literature is that mothers mediate, influence and even define the role of father's involvement with their children, and with the state. Mothers act as gatekeepers to the father / child relationship and to agencies' involvement with fathers. Many reasons exist for mothers not to disclose the fathers' identity including; risk of domestic violence, unintended consequences of his involvement, the loss of state benefits, possible conflict following identification, undocumented immigration status, outstanding arrest warrants, not knowing his identity, or as a form of redress for failing to be a responsible father. Interestingly, research in the US estimated that only one third of women involved with Child Protective Services were prepared to disclose the identity of the non-residential father. (Thoeness et al: 2011). US research has indicated that women who depend on their single parent status for welfare benefits may be motivated not to disclose information about the father. (Ashley et al: 2011, Hahn: 2011, Haurais & Hollingworth: 2009, Smithgall: 2009, Scott & Crooks: 2004).

9. The Constructions and Pathologies of Masculinity in Social Work

An extensive international collection of research substantiates that men are pathologised, (by the deficit model of male parenting and behaviours associated to marginalised masculinities), in the American, Australian, Canadian and British child protection systems. Clearly these pathologies shape intervention as men face a culture of suspicion and mistrust. This can lead to men becoming disillusioned, absenting themselves from their paternal responsibilities, in a contemporary

environment where parenthood is voluntary and optional (for men). (Farmer & Owen; 1998).

Scourfield's (2011 and 2003) research of social workers' attitudes and behaviours towards men bears witness to Rivett's (2010) theory of the deficit model of male parenting. Scourfield found that there are six overriding masculine pathologies and constructions operating in social work; men seen as a 'threat', as 'problematic', as victimiser, as 'absent', 'worthless' and 'irrelevant'.

Scourfield's findings are replicated by Featherstone et al (2010 & 2007) and Ashley et al' s (2008 & 2006) qualitative and comparable studies which reveal that men are assumed to be the risk. Strega et al (2008) reduced these categories to four; *fathers as a risk, fathers as absent, fathers as risk and asset* and *fathers as irrelevant*. Analysis of the data found that social workers viewed 50% of fathers as irrelevant, 30% a risk and 20% an asset. Despite whether the father presented as a risk or asset they were only contacted 50% of the time. (Strega et al: 2008). Scourfield's (2003) research evidences the predilection by social workers that men, in particular their sexuality, is experienced as a violent danger to children, women and themselves. This is reinforced by data that indicates 50% of fathers involved with Children's Social Care are subject to abuse allegations and that female social workers do not engage men due to a fear of sexual violence. (Swann: 2009, Scourfield; 2003).

A contrary picture exists from research conducted by the University of Chicago who found that three groups of fathers emerged following systemic qualitative analysis of Child Protection Services' data from across Illinois's Child Welfare System. The first group were categorised as resident fathers who were: *a potential resource / positively involved*, the second group were resident fathers who were: *negatively involved* and non-resident fathers who were *a potential resource / positively involved*. Examining these groups further it was discovered that differentiated approaches were needed to engage fathers who would also require different types of services. (Smithgall et al: 2009). This research also concluded that engagement of fathers and extended paternal family, had benefits to children and lessened the need for state care or improved the chances of reunification when the child was in care. In terms of abusive resident fathers the research concluded that these men were very difficult to engage or change their behaviours because they lacked insight into their behaviours. (Smithgall et al: 2009).

It is important to be realistic in recognising the family circumstances that confront social workers. Children may be the product of rape or a brief sexual encounter or the mother may be involved in prostitution.

When social workers do work with men they are often from severely disadvantaged marginalised backgrounds and face multiple hardships including discrimination, racism and other forms of abuse. They may be poorly educated, living in poverty, homeless or have a history of sporadic employment or unemployment. They may be involved in criminality or be in prison. These marginalised men often have limited informal or community supports, have drug and or alcohol dependency, have poor

mental health and who become fathers at a young age. These factors determine the fathers' degree of involvement. These men are often emotionally fragile and struggle to respond positively to their child and partner. They may either absent themselves or behave in a threatening, distressing or violent manner, a common experience within child protection social work. These determinants compound the complexities of including fathers in social work intervention.

As Smithgall et al, (2009), points out; all these components make up what we define as child maltreatment. Indeed, domestic abuse appears to be a factor in 60-80% of all cases referred to Child Welfare agencies in America, Britain, Canada and Australia. (Violence and destructiveness find their roots in trauma, abuse and a failure of care. The men social workers meet often have histories of defective attachments and psychological and physical abuse).

International research indicates that child welfare systems fail to recognise fathers' vulnerability and marginalisation leaving children, especially vulnerable by not engaging with fathers and not providing fathers with services to re-dress their behaviours. (There is a danger in discussing the vulnerability of men because it minimises even excuses their violence or at least offers men a 'dual status' [victim / abuser]). (Burgess: 2010, Smithgall: 2009, Seager & Thummel: 2009, Frosh: 1995). Due to a high level of need, in conjunction with men's socialisation not to discuss their vulnerability, participation in social work intervention, therapy, parenting education or fatherhood programmes is poor. (Although, academics like O'Donnell, (2002) have argued that the service provision is poorly designed and fails to meet need).

Service providers tend to have inflated notions of father absence in low income and Black and ethnic minority families because they have failed to identify or engage with the father. Research by Burgess (2010) and others indicates that fathers in the UK, as well as other Western countries, who may be either resident or non-resident, are often close by and involved with high risk families. Indeed Ashley et al (2011) and Smithgall et al (2009) discovered that although fathers were recorded as being involved in between 50% - 68% of assessments, (by the time the child was in care), social workers viewed father involvement as unusual. (Maquire 2009)

Folaron et al: (2009), argue that non-residential fathers, especially those from Black and ethnic minority and working class backgrounds, are the most marginalised group of fathers that interact with Children's Social Care. Studies indicate that it is crucial to identify, listen and empower the non-residential father as he can often pose the skills to be an effective parent. (Asmussen & Weizel: 2010). Dominelli: (1998), has written that social work persists in reinforcing conventional models of role segregation, despite workers being trained to recognise women's structural disadvantages. Coupled with the pathologies about masculinities already identified it can be argued that men receive a very different service from social workers. For example; Ashley et al's (2008) audit of 250 child protection cases discovered that the risks posed by men are assessed but not the strengths they may offer. Kullberg (2005) found that fathers were assessed in their role as carers where women were

not. Single parent fathers were consistently assessed, using a different set of standards, as having more serious problems and yet less deserving than single mothers. Dick and Bronson (2005) argue that gendered attitudes to parenting are also evident in the provision of parenting programmes and early years services which are designed with women in mind. (Jafee et al: 2005, Kullberg; 2005).

Research from statutory children services in Ireland suggests that there is little evidence of any positive discourse about men. This is despite the majority of men who come to the attention of social workers, suffering mental and physical health problems and / or oppression through poverty or structural disadvantage. (Ferguson; 2004). This was mirrored in Scourfield's experience. (2003).

10. An Overview of the Evidence Base; Social Work Practice and the Invisibility of Fathers

Researchers from across the Western World agree that social workers overly concentrate on women and fail to identify, investigate, assess and intervene with men who may be important in children's lives. (Hahn et al: 2011, Ashley et al: 2011, 2008 and 2006, Blewett: 2011, Folaron, Bai & Schneider: 2011, Smithgall: 2009, Swann: 2009, Daniel & Taylor: 1999, 2001, Rosenberg & Wilcox: 2006, Featherstone: 2010, 2003 & 2001, O'Hagan & Dillenburger: 1995, O'Hagan: 1997 and Ryan: 2000). This means, without a doubt, that children involved within child protection systems are at increased risk because fathers, (and other men involved with the child), go un-assessed. (Ofsetd: 2011, Featherstone et al: 2010). Having no wish to pathologise it is imperative to review the many complex reasons that contribute to social work's historic failure to engage fathers.

The literature suggests there are many barriers to engagement including; the father living some distance from the child with anticipated transportation difficulties, the father being in prison or a failure or refusal to establish paternity or the mother being unsure of the identity of the father. (Theoness et al: 2011). Social workers are not visiting fathers even though they know the man's location. Fathers may be reluctant to communicate with a government agency especially if he has had previous experience of social care or where there are immigration difficulties. Fathers may also be reluctant to engage because they lack confidence to assume the fathering role.

Social workers hold gendered perceptions of individuals' competences. My 2009 research hypothesised and later validated that social workers are highly anxious about men as they are confronted daily by negative and violent images of men. To avoid and defend against this anxiety many social workers and the wider child welfare system simply do not engage men in a meaningful way. My 2009 research also discovered that fathers' invisibility in assessments and interventions were not being regularly identified in supervision.

It appeared that managers colluded with workers' anxieties and society's wider negative perceptions, and collectively remained silent throughout the organisation and across the profession. Collusion and defence against anxiety appear to be a recurring theme. This perspective is supported by Seager and Thummel (2009) who argue that the social work profession has colluded for many years with long-established 'male-specific defences against talking'. Thoeness et al (2011) suggested that social workers were reluctant to contact fathers as the father's involvement would have a negative impact on the child and the case or may increase workload as often the father's parenting capacity needed improvement. Munro, (2011) pondered why twenty years of Social Care inspections had not identified such an obvious flaw.

The tragic consequence of the invisibility of fathers is powerfully evidenced by Ofsted's thematic analysis of 482 serious case reviews from April 2007 to March 2011. To précis; the analysis confirmed that: '*the role of fathers has been marginalised*'. (p10.21).

In summary, the analysis concluded that; child welfare agencies failed to recognise the significance of fathers in their role with children, (especially with cases concerning infants). Agencies fail to assess fathers and other men who may not be known to agencies but are present in the home. Agencies fail to engage with non-resident fathers and the wider paternal extended family. Agencies have ambivalent and hostile relationships with fathers; there was a failure to recognise the significance of domestic abuse and an inconsistency in thresholds and practice in relation to domestic violence. Social workers fear of violence also led to children being left in dangerous situations.

Ofsted recommended a need that Safeguarding Children's Boards develop a strategic overview to address this marginalisation and unmanaged area of risk. (Ofsted: 2011, Broadhurst et al: 2010). (The exclusion of fathers has been a recurring theme in many serious case reviews prior to 2007). Whilst analysis of initial and core assessments and initial and review child protection conferences indicate that fathers are contacted later in the process of social work intervention, (although very few decisions in relation to child protection conferences involve fathers). (Ashley et al: 2011).

Research verifies that Children's Social Care have not supported social workers engage fathers. Children's Social Care organisations have not implemented the necessary strategies, systems or culture to engage fathers. Children's Social Care have not recorded data about fathers, trained social workers in engagement and supported social workers through appropriate and professional supervision. Subsequently, Children's Social Care has not supported fathers with appropriate services especially fatherhood and perpetrator programmes. (Featherstone et el: 2010). Research indicates there is no consistent methodology employed to monitor the inclusion of men in assessments or case work. As a result men's information is poorly, inaccurately or not recorded at all. (Ashley et al; 2011 and 2008).

Evidence from separate focus groups of fathers, mothers and social workers from America, Canada and Britain offers contemporary evidence and lists a litany of barriers to men's engagement with social workers. Fathers repeatedly complained of poor communication, that Social Care failed to listen, failed to act and complained about numerous changes in social workers who they perceived to be too young. Ashley et al: (2011 & 2006) found that social workers failed to be flexible to non-resident fathers living at a distance, failed to listen or believe men or investigate their roles in violent families. Men were often seen by students or by inexperienced workers who had not read the case history and who did not inform men of their rights.

Social workers in the US, Canada and the UK reported difficulties over how to manage multiple father figures and serial break-ups. If they assessed that the children's needs were being met by the mother then due to time constraints and high caseloads, they would not engage the father. Social work managers felt men could be involved if family group conferences were used and if data was accurately recorded. (Ashley et al; 2008). Evidence indicates that where fathers are engaged effectively then 62-67% will undertake meaningful work in the interests of their child. Once men learn to navigate the Social Care system they are likely to have a more positive experience. (Reynolds: 2011, Ashley et al: 2011, 2008 & 2006).

11. The Education and Training of Social Workers and Research about Men and Masculinity

Unsurprisingly then, there is overwhelming evidence to suggest that pre-qualifying training fails to prepare social workers for the demands of statutory work. Ashley et al (2008) and Featherstone (2007) found that student social workers are not trained in gender theory, male socialisation and masculinity and not given skills about how to work and intervene with men. Other subjects not included in the curriculum were the legal perspective of fathers and seeing men as strengths. There is a call from Ashley et al (2011) (who provides a lecturing plan for universities), echoed by Munro (2011) for trainee social workers to be trained to work with fathers. However, these topics are not prioritised by the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE), or the HPCC.

Despite fathers being responsible for a great deal of child maltreatment there has been a failure, across the Western Hemisphere, to research the role of violent and abusive fathers preferring to concentrate on mothers. (Featherstone et al: 2010). Ashley et al (2011) recommend that social workers and partner agencies should be specifically trained in working with fathers particularly risky fathers. The lack of literature reflects the lack of attention paid to fathers subsequently failing to equip social workers and other professionals with the practice skills to engage fathers. (Theoness et al: 2011).

12. Violence in Social Work: The Construction of Men as Violent in Social Work

'*It is still insufficiently recognised that violence may completely dominate families where there is severe assault, abuse and / or neglect of children. Violence is a very powerful, and often a very successful, means of controlling another person or situation'*. (Stanley & Goddard: 2002: 150).

We live in a violent world and that violence is perpetuated by men whose capacity for violence is extraordinary and boundless. The universal threat of male physical, and sexual violence, pervades the social work discourse as an assumption exists that; men, who are violent to their partners, will be violent to professionals, and so are best avoided. This is explicable because male domination has always been sustained by violence.

As has already been identified earlier in this Chapter; Connell, (2002), among others, posit that modernity has produced an escalation of violence because the fantasy of masculine power and rationality has been exposed. However, the threat of violence, in individual case work, remains potential as research indicates that it is rarely deconstructed by a social work assessment. (Swann: 2009, Walmsley: 2007, Scourfield; 2002 O'Hagan; 1997).

Littlechild (2005) suggests the changing nature of child protection social work has led to an increase in violence towards social workers. Some families use violence or threat to avoid intervention. Black and ethnic minority social workers will suffer racist abuse as well as physical abuse and intimidation. Evidence from serious case reviews highlight that assessment, protection and care planning can be affected by threat and intimidation (Ofsted: 2011, Brandon 2009; Littlechild; 2002). Research from Australia, Finland, the United States and England indicates that a large number of social workers have suffered threats of physical harm (68%), threats to family (26%) and been stalked (16%). This impacted on the quality of practice in 67% of cases and children were put at greater risk in 43% of cases. (Cooper: 2009). Littlechild (2005) also evidences that social workers fail to report threats often mirroring the behaviour of many women and those survivors of abuse. (Mouzos & Makkai: 2004). However, there is little research about the cause and effect of social workers' fear of sexual violence which was found to be palpable in one small research effort. (Swann: 2009).

Research informs us that in the vast majority of circumstances males are responsible for most forms of violence. Conversely, in child protection work, women are more physically violent. Data from the National Crime Survey (2008) indicates that social workers (particularly younger workers) are at risk of violence from women who are likely to be violent at the point of a court ordered removal of a child or when the child is removed in emergency circumstances. Men, as service users, in children and family work are likely to employ behaviours which are intimidating, persistent, threatening and menacing. (Littlechild 2005 & 2002).

Perceptions of contemporary male violence have, Connell (2002) argues, led to a crisis in modern gender relations. A variety of writers have posited that there is no singular explanation as to why men are violent, that not all men are violent at the same time for the same reason and not all violence is the same. It is also important to consider factors such as mental ill-health, substance misuse and alcohol as contributory factors. (Rivett: 2010). There is evidence of few resources, or organisational and practitioner willingness to work with perceived or actual perpetrators of domestic violence. (Theoness et al: 2011, Ashley et al 2006).

Humphrey and Mullender's, (2002: 5), review of the international literature from 1985 to 1998 and their analysis of case files from 1998 – 2000 found a continuous replicating pattern of denial, avoidance and minimisation dominating social work practice with men. They comment that it is an 'issue which is long overdue for attention'. These findings were echoed in my own research and others in recent years. (Featherstone: 2010 & Swann: 2009).

Goddard and Hunt's (2011) compelling analysis asserts that; denial, avoidance and minimisation remain strategies, adopted by social workers, as a coping mechanism in managing anxiety brought about when they are confronted with the fear of violence mirroring the behaviours of survivors of domestic abuse. Subsequently, the systems and organisation of Children's Social Care has not recognised the need to support social workers intervene with violent men in terms of their identity as a father or father figures or their abuse of power. (Rivett: 2010). Failure to engage abusive men continues the dehumanisation and denigration of women leaving them as victims of violence. This non-engagement of fathers impedes social work intervention with children and families, whilst identifying a fundamental flaw in the management of risk. This non-engagement means that social workers miss opportunities to engage men as fathers thereby missing opportunities to intervene and change violent male behaviour. (Featherstone et al 2010).

Social workers recognise the negative impact of domestic abuse and believe they have a key role in offering insight to parents. Social workers further recognise that most children want the violence to stop but they want to maintain their relationship with their father / the abuser. Research is clear that safety planning systems are essential and need to be established for staff, women and children. Safety planning is the central foundation to encourage social work interventions with fathers. (Ashley et al: 2011).

13. Domestic Abuse

'*An agenda in relation to tackling violence appears to have developed separately from that of engaging fathers. In this agenda, those who are violent are constructed as offenders who should be dealt with in the criminal justice system but they are often fathers and most frequently men. Are they the same fathers whose involvement are to be encouraged or are they different*?' (Featherstone: 2003, p 248).

The reality of men's violence to women and children presents the most complex challenge for Children's Social Care. Every year in the UK there are nearly three hundred thousand incidents of domestic abuse and seven hundred thousand children witness these incidents. Domestic abuse is a gender based crime perpetrated by men upon women and occurs in up to 25% of relationships. 43% of all female murder victims are killed by their partner, ex-partner or lover and in the majority of cases these incidents are precipitated by domestic abuse. In 90% of domestic incidents children are either in the same or an adjoining room. Domestic violence costs England and Wales £15 billion per year. Domestic abuse occurs across cultures, ethnicities and class but there are correlations of increased violence with economic disadvantages. Other variables can include age, marital status, educational attainment and occupation. (Blacklock: 2011 (1), Blewitt: 2011, Stanley et al: 2011, Smithgall: 2009, Mouza & Makkai: 2004).

There has been an increased awareness, within Children's Services, about domestic abuse and the cycle of domestic abuse following the 2002 Adoption and Children Act which has led to all cases of domestic violence involving children being referred to Children's Social Care. Research indicates between 60 - 80% of all cases referred to Children's Social Care have domestic abuse as a factor. (Blacklock: 2011 (1), Blewitt: 2011, Stanley et al: 2011, Smithgall: 2009, Mouza & Makkai: 2004).

Straus (1991) evidenced that 99% of domestic abuse in heterosexual couples is perpetuated by the man. Research reveals that women are reluctant to report incidents of physical and / or sexual abuse or seek assistance from a specialist agency, (when the perpetrator is intimate with them), most, (75%), preferring the support from a friend. Their reluctance is rooted in their assessment of the seriousness of the incident, the location of services, the failure of services to support women or understand their difficulties, the fear their children will be removed, threats of abduction, cultural and linguistic barriers and the loss of community which may protect children from racism. (Stanley et al: 2011, Ashley et al: 2011 Mouza & Makkai: 2004, Humphreys & Mullender: 2002). These figures are unquestionably shocking and have had an effect of damning all men overtime leaving many working in the profession with a jaundice perspective of men.

The literature clearly indicates there is a failure by Children's Social Care to engage with fathers who perpetrate domestic abuse meaning perpetrators are not held to account for their violence, are not risk assessed and not offered treatment. Indeed, in one study social workers failed to engage the perpetrator in 86% of cases. A cyclical continuum is present as the failure to hold men to account perpetuates male abuse because men believe they can use violence in the home with impunity, removing a major inhibitor that prevents violence. (Ashley et al: 2011, Walmsley: 2004 & Jukes: 1999).

Broadhurst et al (2010) surmise that; because social workers are continually inundated with incidents of domestic abuse, they have become acclimatised and de-sensitised to poor parenting. Other reasons given for Children's Social Care's failure to engage perpetrators include; fear of safety, workload, the perpetrators' perceived

limited involvement with their children and a lack of services to refer perpetrators too. I would hypothesis that Children's Social Care has not been organised, (i.e. systems and procedures do not exist), to support social workers identify, engage and provide services to perpetrators of violence. I would further argue that social workers are not trained to engage with these men. Social workers are overwhelmed by negative images and experiences of men, as abusive, and so struggle to see fathers as parents, as possessing strengths and as members of families.

Mothers are the focus of social work engagement in cases of domestic abuse. (Stanley et al: 2011). Social work's failure to engage violent fathers further denigrates mothers as they are often left with the responsibility of controlling the abusers' behaviours. (Scourfield: 2003). Stanley et al (2011) revealed an inadequate stop – start pattern of social work intervention in cases of domestic violence where families were assessed, post incident, referred to services and the case closed only for the case to be 're-opened' after the next incident. This pattern fails to address the complexity of domestic abuse allowing the cycle of violence to continue for many months or years. Stanley et al (2011) discovered that social workers were too readily assured of children's safety if the perpetrator had moved out of the home although research indicates the mother is at greater risk during the initial phase of separation.

14. A Defended System: Understanding How Violence Influences the Social Work System

In critiquing Littlechild, (2005) O'Hagan and others, all write prolifically about violence and social work, yet none comment on either the impact of child abuse and / or domestic violence experienced by social workers in their own childhood or adult lives or how this influences their social work practice. Historically caring work, in particular child protection work, is a feminised activity and is seen as an activity that takes place between women. For example; 80% of Canadian child protection social workers are women. Subsequently, men see social services as designed for women by women. (Walmsley: 2004).

As such social work's response to male abuse will go beyond the boundaries of the individual situation and reflect the historical and structural forces at work in society [the male oppression of women]. The literature fails to acknowledge that; the profession attracts a disproportionately high number of people [women] who have suffered abuse either in their own childhood or in adult relationships. The literature subsequently fails to acknowledge the impact this abuse may have on their ability to manage violent and abusive clients. Even if the female social worker has not suffered abuse in her own life Eichenbaum and Orback (1983) posit that the female child introjects the mother's ambivalent feelings towards her father.

Indeed women often express contempt for their fathers because they are involved in their mother's anger. Psychoanalytic reasoning would indicate that; '*the daughter often carries the mother's rage*', meaning the morbid dread of men is aroused in the transference and they share the experience of the father which intensifies their bond. I posit that social workers hold their father in mind (consciously and

unconsciously) using the experience to work with fathers. (Eichenbaum and Orback 1983: 65)

To further complicate an already complex picture, when female social workers, engage closely with mothers there may be a propensity to '*merge with the other*' within the framework of male domination. (Benjamin: 1998: 12). This merging may contribute to the exclusion of the father especially where there is male violence as male and female social workers have powerful and often painful associations with aspects of their clients' lives. Domestic abuse, like child sexual abuse, induces predominantly painful and difficult feelings. For example; the assault upon a pregnant woman engenders primitive feelings of protection for social workers. (Mouzos & Makkai: 2004, Dutton & Nicholls: 2005).

Women are at greater risk of male sexual violence and this will inevitably affect social work intervention. Female social workers may have gender specific anxieties about controlling the belligerent, destructive and abusive characteristics of men's sexual transference. This is only a recently identified contribution as to why men are excluded. Female social workers struggle to manage the male transference of sexualised hostility designed to disguise their vulnerability. Counter-transference operates in assessments, interventions and may go some way in explaining the under reporting, denial and accommodation of violence by social workers. (Maguire: 2004, Mawson: 2002, Parton et al: 1997, Summit: 1983).

I have no desire to pathologise social workers in fact quite the opposite. Those social workers employed in Children's Social Care are frequently highly dedicated. They work in very complex circumstances with children and families in crisis whilst having to contend with highly complex internal systems. (Goddard & Hunt: 2011). However, it is important to reflect on how social workers, who have powerful and often painful associations with parts of their clients' lives and who witness daily the atrocities of child abuse and domestic violence, psychologically protect themselves.

As we have established child protection services in Britain is highly feminised. This influences social work's response to men. Predominately female social workers, (who may have experiences of domestic abuse or child abuse in their own lives), are left to protect vulnerable women and children from male abuse. I believe female social workers are exposed to powerful feelings of maternal transference, needing to protect (whilst revolted by male abuse).

In a similar vein Maguire, (2009), argues that it is crucial that the profession recognise the power of our sexuality in the work place, in particular, how eroticised maternal transference leaves social workers with uncontained anxieties about the fathers' aggression or abuse eliciting feelings of revulsion in the social worker further contributing to the exclusion of the father. This was confirmed by my own preparatory research (Swann: 2009), where female social workers revealed they were more fearful of sexual violence from men than physical violence. (Goddard & Hunt: 2011).

15. Defended Organisations Defended Professionals

It was crucial to investigate and understand the complexity of the resisting forces in order to confront and reduce resistance. Subsequently, the literature on defensive behaviour is crucial when considering how social workers exclude fathers. Colman (2011) summarises defences by stating that: '*More generally, it is a pattern of feeling, thought or behaviour arising in response to a perception of psychic danger, enabling a person to avoid conscious awareness or conflicts or anxiety-arousing ideas or wishes'*. (Trevithick quoting Coleman: 2011: 389)

The theory of social defences was initially advanced by Jacques (1955) who hypothesised how unconscious collusions developed in organisations which then misrepresented or rejected work based events that engendered unwanted emotions. Later Jacques developed his ideas further arguing that social and organisational defences came about because of poor organisational systems. Although the most prominent writer on defences was Menzies Lyth (1988) in relation to health care; Goddard and Hunt (2011), Ruch and Murray (2011) and Walker (2011) as well as many other commentators on the social work profession, have written that social work organisations have developed similarly highly sophisticated defences to reduce the impact of the social worker-client relationship by denying its significance.

Psychoanalytically, it is essential and inevitable that individuals develop psychological defences to protect themselves within the dynamic features and stresses of professional working relationships. Covert defensive systems develop in response to child abuse and conflict which are hard to recognise and decipher. This means unconscious processes are operating within human associations and institutions. They act as defensive avoidance of any work, which provokes anxiety. With little recognition of these processes, collaboration is regarded as a threat to an individual's sense of 'self' and subsequently defended against.

Social workers are confronted daily with human frailty and vulnerability in circumstances that involves uncertainty and risk and which evoke powerful emotional responses; fear, revulsion, anger and shame. However, and as Munro wrote, the emotional impact of social work often goes unrecognised. (2011). Applying this theory to fathers I would suggest that social workers employ psychological defences to avoid thinking about and engaging men. Repeated encounters with domestic abuse and child abuse and a perceived failure in casework, can lead social workers and others in the helping professions, to experience feelings of intolerable guilt and anxiety. These feelings encourage social workers to adopt defensive behaviours that protect themselves from blame, recrimination and the consequences of failure, falling back to the narrowest of definitions of the primary task. Many of these defences are unconscious guarding us from psychic harm whilst distorting our perception of reality. This can lead to children and parents being depersonalised and categorised denying the significance of the individual. Equally, social workers collusively redistribute responsibility and irresponsibility when working with men. Men, (as perceived as unbearable), are split off and grouped as

irresponsible, absent or violent. (Whittaker: 2011, Cooper et al; 2003, Roberts; 2002).

Children's Social Care has consistently resisted the need to include fathers in social work interventions. One can confidently hypothesis that the barriers to that resistance are well entrenched. I argue that over the past twenty years that when these defences combine it has thrust professional knowledge, supervision and management systems towards a culture that is a '*collusive coalition of silence*'. Crucially, this avoidance and resistance leads to anti task behaviour. The primary normative task of social workers, within Children Social Care, is to protect children and this is achieved through robust risk assessment and care planning. However, if Children's Social Care repeatedly fails to assess and intervene with fathers then the primary task goes unmet. Social workers fail to fully assess the child's safety as they disregard dangerous men in order to prioritise and protect the wellbeing of the professionals involved. (Ofsted: 2011, Munro: 1998, Stanley: 1997) My argument here is that men are excluded because social workers, managers and Children's Social Care, (and other organisations such as health care), defend and resist against their inclusion, often unconsciously, by denying and avoiding their existence. Fathers are further excluded because social workers lack confidence in their authority. (Cooper et al; 2003).

The literature suggests that social workers adopt stereotypes of behaviours related to marginalised masculinity such as the absent father and abusive violent and sexual predator, (as well as the ideal new father), through internalised norms, values and beliefs developed through their own experiences. It is my premise that unconscious effects of gender socialisation influence the process of working with men where negative stereotypes are caricatured and magnified within a social work context. (Roskill; 2008, Ashley 2006 Trowell et al; 2002 and Marsiglio; 1999).

16. The Role of Supervision in the Inclusion of Fathers in Social Work Interventions

As the NSPCC reported in 2010, social workers require a more sophisticated approach to supervision that recognises and responds to the powerful, negative feelings and multiple defences engendered by child protection work. Sophisticated supervision will provide social workers with insight about their own bias, preconceptions and prejudice about fathers. To be 'meta-competent' supervisors need to be trained and supported to deliver sophisticated supervision, develop worker resiliencies and de-brief social workers following critical incidents. (Goddard & Hunt: 2011 and Munro: 2011, Broardhurt et al: 2010, Laming 2009). However, in the majority of social workers' experiences supervision fails to recognise or address fears and subsequent defensive behaviours brought about by child protection work. (Indeed, supervision can be used to defend the organisation rather than the worker).

Social workers need to explore their fears of male violence in supervision as they may have internalised a threatening paternal figure identified by their own '*cruel father*' or internalised '*an idealised father*' when working with men. Social workers'

supervision needs to be more sophisticated able to recognise countertransference permitting defences to be lowered and anxieties contained. This will allow social workers to feel safer and more confident to include fathers. Supervision needs to recognise that [female] social workers will experience countertransference anxieties caused by the man's aggressive sexual fantasies to '*dominate the object*' [the social worker] in an attempt to re-dress the perceived professional power held by female social workers over men.

17. How to Include Fathers in Social Work Interventions and Services

Seager and Thummel write that; '*Society has long turned a blind eye to male psychology and has colluded with male emotional self-neglect by failing to provide gender specific services for men*'. (2009, p 250).

There is a failure by many academics to recognise that inclusion will only be achieved through an entire organisational approach, a multiple systemic change based on the need to identify and engage fathers as early as possible. Fathers' influence on mothers is a fundamental reason to engage men and research clearly indicates children remain in contact with their fathers despite incidents of domestic violence. Blacklock (2011) (1) sets out the key components of an effective intervention with perpetrators of violence echoed by other commentators on the treatment of domestic abuse. (Rosenberg & Wilcox: 2006). In response academics are currently advocating for a diverse tiered array of services to men, not to dilute the safety of women and children, but recognising the need for a pragmatic diverse approach that caters for the spectrum and severity of behaviours and violence.

Research informs us that services for men are few in number, feminised, fragmented, poorly understood and not easily accessed. Services fail to meet 'sub-populations such as non-residential fathers, fathers living at some distance, fathers in prison or fathers with housing, substance misuse alcohol or mental health problems. Services fail to recognise or meet the needs of Black and ethnic minority fathers. Results from perpetrator programmes have failed to demonstrate long-term change in abusive men's behaviour and there has been criticism that perpetrator programmes are overly long. (Ashley et al: 2011).

Men are perceived as unmotivated, avoidant and resistant. Men are often ill-equipped to nurture and, Eichenbaum and Orbach (1983) argue, they are afraid of women. This has an important bearing on how we develop services and intervene. Services do not appreciate that men are collectively socialised to avoid therapy and similar services. Services do not recognise that many of the fathers that require social work intervention have a poor model of self-worth (through an infancy characterised by parental harshness, poor maternal attunement and an insecure attachment), as well as other vulnerabilities previously identified in this chapter and will avoid or abstain themselves from traditional services allowing professionals to assume they are disinterested in their fatherhood. (Cultural and social learning theories indicate that men also learn to be violent as a method to resolve conflict). (Jukes: 1999).

As Ashley et al (2011; 46) describes: '*some of these fathers write themselves off dismissively' as 'bad news*' and walk away from their child. Young fathers often avoid services for fear of being blamed or because they feel overwhelmed by the thought of being a father. As services do not understand the needs of fathers' logically those services are unable to bring about meaningful change to improve family dynamics and child safety. (Smithgall et al: 2009). The limited research that does exist about services to fathers evidences this lack of understanding and describes a poor take up and high drop-out rate especially between interview and start of any course or activity. Services to men need to be designed around the needs of men, particularly non-residential fathers, to improve child safety and family dynamics. (Thoeness: et al: 2011 & Smithgall et al: 2009). Amussen & Weizel (2009) recommend a well-planned and extended period of engagement aimed at building a strong alliance between the father and the practitioner. Services must recognise it takes time to engage these men. A small number of services have been established in a limited number or local authorities in the UK. These include; services for young, divorced fathers or those with mental health or substance misuse problems. There is a call from academics like Ashley et al (2011) for local authorities to develop an inclusive organisational culture to mobilise a range of current settings and resources to work with fathers. Crucially, there is a further call for local authorities to meaningfully work with violent men.

Research literature fails to emphasise the importance of identifying the father as early as possible and including him prior to the birth of the child. Systems need to be designed creatively to ensure earlier intervention. For services to be more inclusive, academics in this field concur, organisational change is needed. Children's Services need to redesign their strategies, (and overtly acknowledge the need to work with violent men), and redeploy their resources to mobilise services that come into contact with men to engage all men. (Hahn: 2011 and Rivett: 2010). Research identifies the need to support greater contact between fathers and their children, to provide more flexible community based services especially to expectant fathers and early infant services. There is an obvious need to provide a greater spectrum of domestic violence services, as well as proactively engage fathers whilst in prison.

There are calls for increased couple counselling. Social workers require improved risk assessment tools, electronic reference of services and more family group conferences. (Ashley et al: 2011, Asmussen & Weizel: 2009). There is a need for a more knowledgeable social workforce particularly skilled in domestic abuse and with grounding in masculinity and work with couples. Hahn (2011) and Smithgall et al (2009), amongst others, evidence that including fathers in the lives of children, who are in state care, is likely to increase reunification and reduce budgetary pressures. Research evidences the need to jointly commission and jointly provide services for men and for agencies to improve how they work together.

Social workers and other professionals are most likely able to engage the father if they are able to identify, locate and contact the father within thirty days of the case opening or as early in the child's life as possible. Interestingly, and rather

controversially, research indicates that successful inclusion is further supported if the father is interviewed with the mother. (Smithgall: 2009). Social workers need to assess fathers and abusive men who may target vulnerable women. Social workers need to recognise their duty to include the father as our ethical responsibility is to alleviate distress, dysfunction and quoting Trevithick, '*plain human misery*'. (2011, p 403).

Academics suggest that child protection services and the courts should adopt a measure or criteria to denote when men should not be engaged. Smithgall and colleagues drafted one in 2009 and this proves to be a useful guide to professionals.

It is crucial to identify and address the structural barriers that marginalise subordinated fathers, especially non-resident fathers and those fathers from Black and ethnic minority groups, if sustainable change is to occur. There is a small, yet informed, group of academics and practitioners who are developing an evidenced base on how to include fathers in social work practice. A systemic approach is recommended. The Fatherhood Institute have written a collection of guides and checklists explaining to organisations and practitioners how to be a father inclusive organisation. (To précis, the literature recommends that Children's Social Care needs to take a strategic overview joining partners across Children's Services jointly developing policy and strategic planning documents (for example; the local children and young people's plan and parenting strategies), clearly recording the importance of engaging fathers especially structurally marginalised fathers). The Fatherhood Institute, (supported by most academics in this field), recommend the systemic engagement, (including outreach and recruitment), of fathers, as early as possible across universal, targeted and specialist services which starts with the collection of data about fathers' needs. Services need to be timely and in a preferred location outside of normal working hours and that appeal to fathers' interests.

In their seminal work Ashley et al (2011) provide a wealth of detailed recommendations in working with risky fathers. They advocate for an effective preventative and early intervention approach that includes effective family support and domestic abuse services, including the need to resource domestic violence perpetrator programmes whilst jointly sharing skills and jointly commissioning services. They also advocate for services to take a multi-agency approach to engagement, assessment and the monitoring of fathers subsequent behaviours. Services must have a common approach in addressing domestic violence and work together with the voluntary sector. The Home Office (January 2012) developed a tiered approach to the provision of domestic violence services. A number of leading commentators on domestic violence advocate that Local Authorities support the establishment of domestic violence courts as there is evidence to indicate it reduces family violence. (Mouzas & Makkai: 2004).

There is a demand to empower fathers, a need to support father/child relationships in vulnerable families, engage fathers at the birth of the child or earlier and support fathers as well as mothers in times of family stress or breakdown whilst providing fathers with specific inclusive services that address deeper barriers to progress

(racism, poverty, criminality, violence and limited education and training). Parenting programmes, but also alcohol and drug services programmes, should have father's parenting capacity as elements of the intervention. Service design needs to recognise male vulnerability and pay particular attention to the needs of young fathers. Theoness et al (2011) recommends that fathers require self-help and peer support, information to navigate the child welfare and child protection systems and education and skills building as parents. Educationally, there is a call to promote fathers' involvement in children's learning in Early Years provision which needs to be converted to be father inclusive as do schools. To achieve this, the Children's Services' workforce needs to be developed into a strengths based father inclusive workforce. (Fatherhood Institute: 2011, 2010 & 2009, Field: 2011, Hahn: 2011).

An important yet crucial caveat, engaging fathers must always be located within an obligation to confront entrenched power relations and recognition that fathers are situated within a complex network of relationships of power with other men, women, and children and within wider society. Services, and a father inclusive strategy within Children's Social Care and its partners, must benefit children and women. (Featherstone et al: 2010). In terms of practice American social workers are now expected to demonstrate 'due diligence' in their efforts to locate the father which has now become a practice expectation. Children's Social Care and other organisations need to improve the quality of supervision as well as systems and procedures of safety planning to ensure social workers feel safe and confident to engage fathers.

Conclusion

This macro and micro theoretical conceptual analysis has been a crucial tool to articulate my perspective and develop the aims of research project. I have evidenced that there are many complex reasons for why an institutional bias operates in Children's Social Care which has then failed to modernise and presently fails to relate to its contexts.

This macro and micro theoretical conceptual analysis identified barriers in technical detail which in turn assists in the design of this research project to include fathers in Children's Social Care. The focus of social work is abusive behaviour. However, social workers are not trained, resourced or supported to challenge that abuse. What is crucial is that any change must address professionals' fears of violence which must be at the centre of any future work. Children regularly stay in touch with their fathers despite incidents of domestic violence. (Ashley et al: 2011).

Children's Social Care has a legal responsibility to safeguard vulnerable children. Those Children's Social Care departments who collect data about fathers, train their social workers and provide domestic violence perpetrator programmes and then include fathers and make them visible will in the medium to long term reduce the risk of harm to children and women. Children's Social Care must support social workers include fathers to support men better parent their children and so achieve better outcomes for children. (Ashley et al: 2011, Walmsley: 2002).

This summation merely analyses the problem or what Cooper (2003) describes as '*bureaucratic responses to what is really a problem of civil society'*. The primary problem is in the relationship between children, mothers, fathers and the state. (Cooper, et al; 2003: 21, Mawson; 2002).

Chapter 3: Methodology

Chapter 3: Methodology

1. *Introduction*

We needed a method that would be able to coordinate the activities of practitioner researchers, adaptable enough to manage emergent forms of data gathering as well as manage the regular testing and trialling of different social work practice initiatives. We also needed to be able to measure the state of father inclusion at the start and at the end of the research project to assess whether our experiment had worked. This chapter explains how we went about this.

To accomplish this explanation this chapter is divided into four parts:

- **Part One**: describes the research method and plan.
- **Part Two**: explains how we made sense of the data. I provide an example of how we applied the data analysis framework to one co-operative inquiry meeting
- **Part Three**: explains the implementation of the method and the mechanics of the research process.
- **Part Four**: addresses issues of validity, reliability and the legitimacy of the method.

I quote the voices of co-inquirers to evidence application of the principles of the method and demonstrate insight. My aim in this Chapter is to provide the reader with evidence of clarity of thought and analysis and evidence of the coherence in the application of the method. This chapter needs to be cross-referenced with the chronology of activity (Chapter 4 and Appendix 2) and when reading how the research was implemented in Chapters 5 and 6 and how we came to the research findings in Chapter 7.

We settled upon a complimentary multiple research method. We would employ a pre and post evaluation auditing a large sample of case files before the research began and at its conclusion. We then identified a group work process entitled co-operative inquiry. This group work process would cultivate a group of social work practitioners into '*a community of researchers*' who would be supported over a year and a half to experiment with different techniques to work with fathers. The concept being that this group would act to bring about a sustainable change in our organisation. Co-operative inquiry encourages emergence which often cannot be planned for or predicted. This emergence can be located in the methodology because, as the inquiry evolved, a number of other data gathering activities emerged. See Diagrams 3.1 and 3.2.

Diagram 3.1 provides an illustration of the Multiple Method.

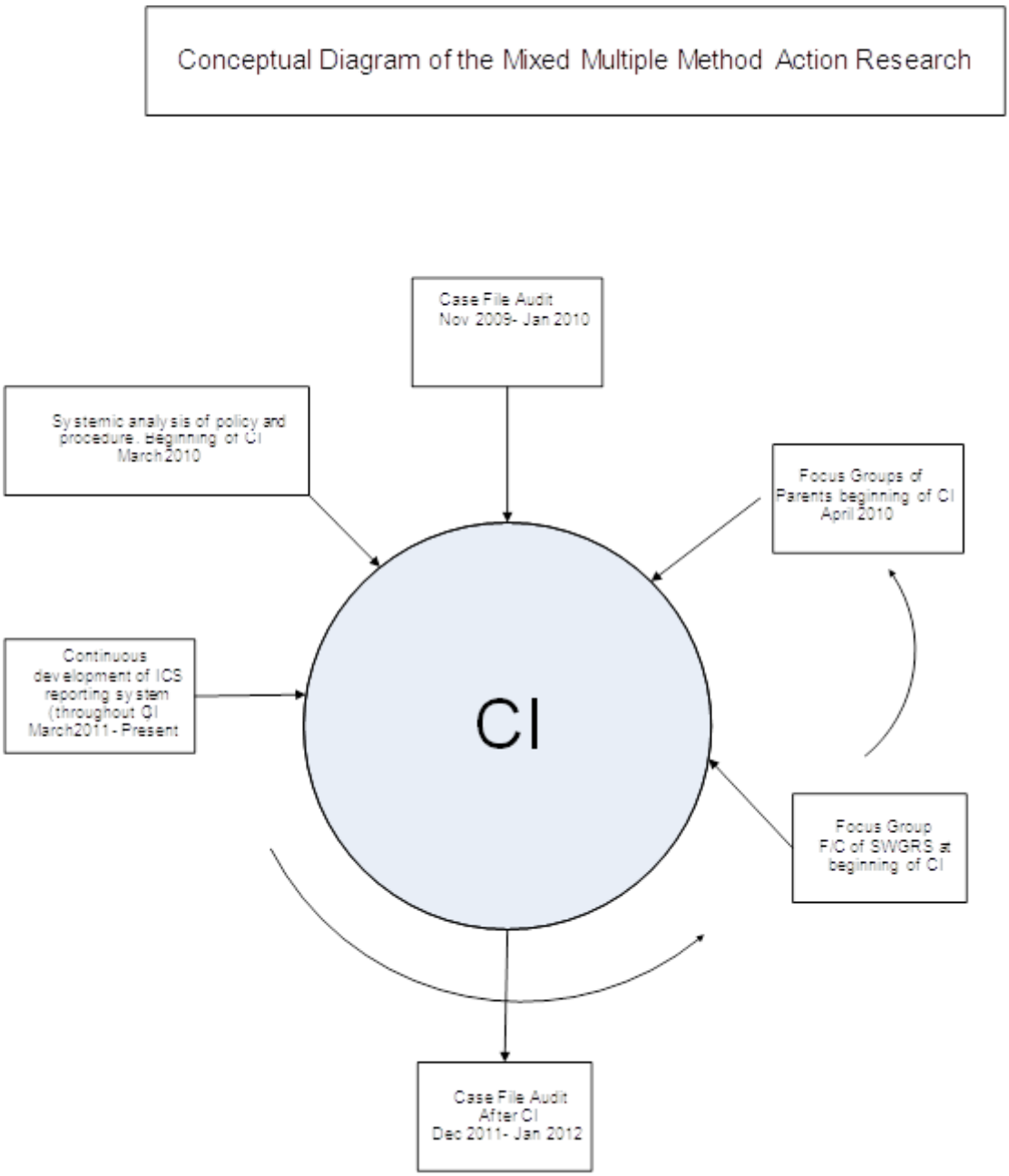
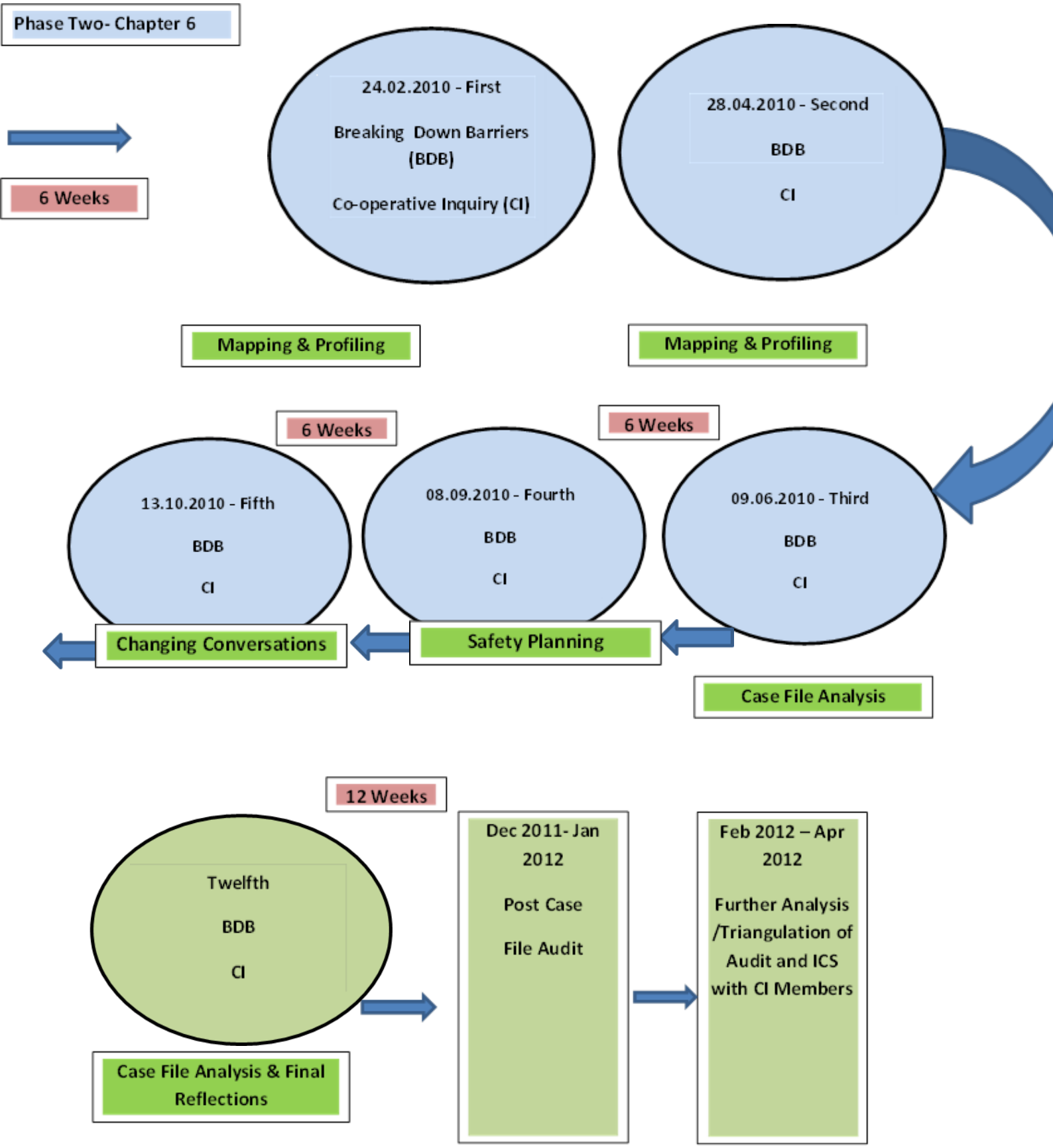


Diagram 3.2 Visual Map and Chronology of the Implementation of the Research Methodology.


Phase Two- Chapter 6
6 Weeks
24.02.2010 - First
Breaking Down Barriers (BDB)
Co-operative Inquiry (CI)
28.04.2010 - Second
BDB
CI
Mapping & Profiling
Mapping & Profiling
6 Weeks
6 Weeks
13.10.2010 - Fifth
BDB
CI
08.09.2010 - Fourth
BDB
CI
09.06.2010 - Third
BDB
CI
Changing Conversations
Safety Planning
Case File Analysis
12 Weeks
Twelfth
BDB
CI
Case File Analysis & Final Reflections
Dec 2011- Jan 2012
Post Case File Audit
Feb 2012 – Apr 2012
Further Analysis /Triangulation of Audit and ICS with CI Members

1. *A Multiple Method*

The Multiple Methodology:

- **The Literature Review**
- **Pre-Case File Audit**
- **Co-operative Inquiry (including a mapping and profile, data from ICS, data from case studies and interviews)**
- **Post-Case file Audit**

Each single technique of data gathering is very useful as a singular activity but I felt relying on a sole method would be a miscalculation. I was keen to use a multiple method.

This strategy allowed the inquiry to combine the quantitative and qualitative data generated by the myriad of activities in the co-operative inquiry with an analysis of the data generated by the pre and post case-file audit. This methodology was complimentary adding layer upon layer of detail whilst providing balance as in this case between quantitative, (case file audit), and qualitative (co-operative inquiry), giving richer data and a more accurate account through triangulation. The quantitative compliments the qualitative whilst enhancing interpretability whilst supporting the validity of the research by studying the research topic from multiple standpoints. The use of multiple methods also reduces inappropriate uncertainty. (Robson: 1999).

Multiple methods supports the use of triangulation which allows for some minimisation of bias; i.e. measurement bias caused by the way you collect data, sampling or omission bias caused by when you do not cover all of the population you are studying, procedural bias which happens when participants are put under pressure to provide data. Robson (2002) argues that the recognition of bias is a crucial component of reflectivity as well as aiding researchers' capacity to identify methodological limitations. The main components of the multiple method are: summarised in Table 3.1. and are illustrated in Diagrams 3.1 and 3.2.

Table 3.1 below provides a brief overview of the Main Components of the Research Methodology:

The Main Components of the Multiple Methodology

1. **Literature review**
2. **Pre-Case file audit**
3. **Co-operative inquiry of 12 reflection-action-reflection cycles which generated a number of other data gathering activities internal to the co-inquiry:**

A 'map and profile' of the needs of fathers (See Chapter 5).
The development of ICS to record fathers engagement (See Chapter 7).
Fifty seven case studies analysed where fathers had been included to identify techniques in inclusive practices (See Chapter 10).
A semi-structured interview method and interview ten practitioners.
Co-operative inquiry concludes with all of the data triangulated and findings agreed (See Chapter 7 and 10).

4. **Post-Case file audit analysed and triangulated by co-inquirers (See Chapter 8).**
5. **Unplanned Ofsted Inspection of Safeguarding & Looked After Services validating the research methodology (See Chapter 7).**
6. **Thesis written and findings shared with co-operative inquirers.**

2. *The Literature Review*

The literature review informed the methodological choice. I searched for primary studies from 2008 – 2012. I employed systematic digital searches across libraries, websites and electronic databases to collect germane primary studies. The search focused on identifying the sources of administrative thinking, policy and legislative history and philosophical and conceptual perspectives. The search included resources accessed via the Tavistock and Portman Library, Joseph Roundtree Organisation, Google Scholar, PsycInfo; Social Services Abstracts; Sociological Abstracts, Community Care, NSPCC, GSCC, Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE), and the National Children's Bureau (NCB) using and cross referencing terms such as; 'men', 'social work', 'family support', 'fathers, social services', 'men and child protection', 'violence', 'violent fathers' 'Black and ethnic minority men / fathers', fathers and child development, hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinity, marginalised masculinity and multiple masculinities, sustainability, practitioner / researcher, inside researcher, researching your own organisation, research methods, action research, co-operative inquiry, case file audits, roles, multiple roles, complexity, organisational complexities, power, learning organisations, knowledge management, emergence, feminism, facilitation, change management, boundaries and other complex variants of Boolean logic and citation searching. The goal was to scrutinize the literature as methodically and carefully as possible. This effort resulted in Chapter Two which became what Pawson (2006) describes as a '*meta-strategy*' designed to pool results from a broad range of international perspectives, whilst identifying and extracting data to inform the research design and to be shared amongst research participants. The goal of this '*meta-strategy*' was to utilize all relevant primary studies to design a research methodology that would successfully operate within the milieu of a busy London children and families social work service.

The literature review became an evolving and emergent body of knowledge as the research evolved. The literature provided background, traced the development of theories of intervention, looked for evidence to test these theories and was a continual aid to exploring new themes whilst fine tuning concepts, hypothesis and embryonic theories. For example; the literature review informed my decision to use a before and after case-file audit. Following the Lambing Inquiry (2003) Children's Social Care started to use sophisticated data gathering and reporting systems. I knew using only action research would not appeal to the organisational and senior management culture which relies on the analysis of quantitative data as well as audits and other data gathering techniques.

I believed the case-file audit would appeal to the organisational culture whilst I hoped it would evidence how the co-operative inquiry brought about practice changes.

3. *The Pre and Post-Case File Audits*

The audit tool used for the 2009 and 2012 case-file audit was reproduced, [with their permission], from the Family Rights Group who developed an audit framework to examine father inclusion in three Local Authorities Children's Social Care Departments across England for the publication; Fathers Matters 2 and Fathers Matters 3 (2008 and 2011). This audit framework acted as a proven administrative control system whilst providing an auditing mandate to reduce error variance, an auditing procedure and an auditing objective whilst reinforcing basic standards. (See Appendix:1 for a copy of the audit tool). (Pawson: 2006).

Data, about fathers who were involved with Children's Social Care, was gathered by auditing a sample of seventy randomly selected case files between November 2009 and January 2010. Between December 2011 and January 2012 a further, (two months after the co-operative inquiry concluded), seventy different case files were audited.

A criterion, (or auditing procedure), was applied for case selection during both audits; fourteen cases were identified from five Children-in-Need Teams. The cases, [sample], were selected at random but included five cases in initial assessments, five cases in core assessment and four cases subject to the child protection processes per team. This selection process meant that 75% of cases audited had achieved the statutory threshold of Children-in-Need and 25% the statutory threshold for Child Protection. Domestic violence featured in 80% of all cases selected. The range included an assortment of children with different ages, genders and ethnicities. Both audits were completed by reading ICS. Both sets of data were recorded anonymously onto a pre-designed multinomial electronic model using an Excel spread sheet and then analysed and compared by four co-operative inquiry members who had volunteered to triangulate all the data five months after the co-operative inquiry concluded.

The pre-case file audit provided the co-operate inquiry with 'baseline' data. The case-file audits acted as comparison, in order to assess whether social work practice had improved.

In completing the case-file audit we adopted the general framework for auditing standards from the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI: 2001). We adhered to the INTOSAI's basic principles and compliance with good practice, field standards, planning, supervision, analysis, review and reporting. Probability theory was used to estimate sampling error as it allowed us to consider the distribution of estimates that would be produced by larger samples. In this case we selected a random, (although within a criterion), seventy cases as an estimate of all cases allocated to social workers again within the criterion. The 2012 audit was to find out whether any change had occurred.

The case-file audits set the scene however the main tool to gather data was from the family of Action Research.

4. Action Research Supporting Researcher Reflexivity

'*I want to be part of the research but more than just answering a few questions in a survey or interview. I want to be able to influence the research design, direction and decisions*.' A quote taken from the first induction meeting from a social worker.

I understood as a social worker, researcher, student and manager that my research would be complex because of these multiple roles. I knew the concept of power; knowledge and oppression were all subjects of concern which potentially allowed me an advantageous and oppressive vantage point. (Alexandrov: 2009). I did not want to be undemocratic and design a unilateral research activity. I recognised from my many conversations with social workers that I needed a method that would meaningfully involve them in the development of social work practice. I wanted a method that would create 'space' where we, as practitioners / researchers, could think together reflecting on the learning from our actions.

Action research appealed to me as a methodology because it is founded on empowerment and encourages reflection but more crucially includes participants within '*a mutually supportive collective endeavour*'. Indeed Action Research was described by Carr and Kemis as a; '*self-reflective community*'. (Winter & Munn-Giddings: 2003: 33). Certainly these are principles' that appeal to the value-base of the social work profession. Seel (2008) identifies that to achieve change and improve practice we must empower our workforce whilst Stanley (2011) argues that to challenge male abuse social workers must feel confident and empowered. Action research is a method that potentially could achieve these aims and the aims of the research identified in Chapter 1.

As I identified in the personal biography, in Chapter 1, I brought to the research certain experiences, influences, biases as well as multiple roles. I believed the forum created by action research would support research participants whilst ameliorating those influences and biases. (Reason and Bradbury et al: 2009, Winter & Munn-Giddings: 2003). The more I read the more I was convinced that action research was an ideal method to use for this research.

Action research allows for practitioner/ researchers to design and implement their own research methodology which is why all the data generated by all of the different research activities was discussed, reflected on and analysed as part of the cycle of inquiry within the action research. There are many varieties of participant research within the family of Action research. I was particularly attracted to Co-operative Inquiry.

5. What is Co-operative Inquiry?

'*Co-operative inquiry involves two or more people researching a topic through their own experience of it, using a series of cycles in which they move between this experience and reflecting together on it*'. (Heron; 1996: 1). Co-operative inquiry is

understood [and explained here] as a process between action and reflection. Co-operative inquiry offers practitioners the best current approach to '*enabling and encouraging emergence in organisations*' whilst allowing co-inquirers to explore a highly complex phenomenon using controlled experiments. (Seel: 2008 (8: 9)

Co-operative inquiry is a participative, person centred method which uses participants' own experiences and emotions as research instruments studying with people rather than on them. Co-operative inquiry's primary method is to use a series of reflective cycles, moving several times between reflection and action paying explicit attention to an agreed set of procedures to ensure validity and trustworthiness.

Co-operative inquiry is a very appealing method when one considers the context and environment of Children's Social Care. Co-operative inquiry is the critically reflective ideal as it recognises multiple roles, it demystifies research, utilises practitioner expertise and builds an organisationally based culture of inquiry whilst off-setting hierarchical and power relationships. Co-operative inquiry projects must be methodologically sound, procedural, ethical, transparent and justifiable in order to be perceived as legitimate. (Douglas; 2002). Co-operative inquiry, in its purist form, is designed to shift the balance of power by challenging the division between researcher and subject through the establishment of a participative, democratic relationship amongst those taking part in the inquiry, (especially where peer relationships are already established as in this case). This provides the foundation for emotional states to be identified and tensions and projections discussed.

Co-operative inquiry, in its full form, (the model adopted in this research), allows participants to move cyclically between the roles of co-researchers and co-subjects totally immersing themselves in reflection, as researchers and action, as co-subjects. Primacy is given to transformative inquiries, such as this, that involve action by experimenting with different forms of practice to nurture change in practice. (Reason & Heron; 2009. Baldwin; 2009). Co-operative inquiry is an intrinsic part of the methodology and has been utilized because it is suitable and compatible with the topic being researched. Co-operative inquiry is self-directed, participative, democratic, (epistemologically and politically) and is '*practice near research*'. For example; in this co-operative inquiry participants commissioned, coordinated and took part in a small piece of research and consultation from the Fatherhood Institute. Further examples include:

- Co-inquirers defined the area of study.
- They chose the research question and identified research aims.
- They designed the method.
- They conducted the research.
- They interpreted the data.

This research methodology is an emergent process, it allows participants to understand their world, develop new, creative ways to think and learn how to act to bring about change. A further example; all data gathering strategies, except for the

pre and post-case file audits, emerged from the co-operative inquiry activity itself and were designed to support and feed into the co-operative inquiry process.

Co-inquirers are both co-researchers, fully involved in the research design, content and method as well as acting as co-subjects willing to explore their emotional responses which acted as further data. This is what co-inquiries said of the method.

CI 5: '*It was our method and our research we were not just the subjects. We chose it, we designed it and I felt we, as practitioners, were at the centre of it'*.

CI 7: '*We had the power to ask what we wanted to know and we had some resources to find out'*.

CI 9: '*It was great because we got to design some of the research when it began. We employed a couple of researcher assistants* [referring to the Fatherhood Institute mapping and profiling at the beginning of the research] *to help us get a sense of the current practice and look at our systems and policies something we didn't have the time to do. This set us up nicely. It also made us feel as if we were in control of the research. It was very empowering to decide how we were going to spend the £5000*'.

CI11: '*I understood it, it was flexible and it appealed to me because of my value base as a social worker'*.

CI12: '*I liked the cycle of action and reflection because we could measure every few weeks whether practice was changing*.'

CI13: '*It was good to work with one of our senior managers so differently. He was nearly one of us'*.

In co-operative inquiry there is a planned interaction and relationship between reflection and understanding balanced with action, practice and experience. Validity is prioritised throughout with the application of agreed procedures and the use of a wide ranging set of skills. (See Appendix 3). Co-operative inquiry is a causal active agent or engine for change and an independent variable which encourages change. It creates and supports a self-generating culture of inquiry within the wider organisation developing the confidence of practitioners whilst allowing co-inquirers to take risks in the development of new working practices. Co-operative inquiry creates a forum where participants, (co-inquirers), are emotionally and ideologically '*discovery orientated*'. Co-operative inquiry allows different people in different teams and locations to implement and experiment with new practice contributing to further theoretical development. (Reason & Bradbury: 2009 & Pawson: 2006).

Co-operative inquiry appealed to me because there is a strong emphasis on developing self-awareness, personal knowledge and noting the reflexivity of judgements and assumptions through critical self-questioning to identify meaning. As I identified in the personal biography in Chapter 1 I needed to use a methodology like this to balance my own influences and bias. An integral part of reflexivity was to question the foundations of our existing knowledge in order to assemble alternative knowledge. This is evidenced through Chapters 6 and 7 which allowed for the evaluation of the research process encouraging transparency, scrutiny and validity. (Heron & Reason: 2009).

Co-operative inquiry allows for multiple methods of data to be gathered within the inquiry itself. For example; in this inquiry we mapped services to fathers in the first three cycles of action and reflection which informed the research aims as explained in Chapter 5. A further example is the development of performance data on the engagement of fathers using ICS as explained in Chapter 7. Co-operative inquiry encourages cross-fertilization and the sharing of ideas amongst participants which we achieved through the original research, the initial case-file audit, and the systematic analysis. Co-operative inquiry recognises that as a practitioner / researcher my implicit hypothesis and theoretical interests will always influence again addressing some of the issues I identified in the personal biography. Co-operative inquiry is a convincing means of approaching the research question because of its aptitude for empowerment and its capacity to transcend hierarchies, defences and democratically achieve practical transformations.

To be successful co-operative inquiry projects must be methodologically sound, procedural, ethical, transparent and justifiable in order to be perceived as legitimate. Co-operative inquiry involves practitioners in transforming practices that can only be transformed through practice participation by building theories in practice. Indeed as Senge and Scharmer (2009) point out '*co-operation in fostering organisational transformational is essential*'. Co-operative inquiry is an ideal method to confront deeply held psychological defences in a participatory, trusting, containing environment which, as Park (2009) affirms, can only come from a '*human closeness not separation*'.

6. *Data Gathering Methods Which Emerged During the Course of the Co-operative Inquiry*

As described above co-operative inquiry is emergent. In this co-operative inquiry other data gathering techniques developed through the cycle of reflection and action as the methodology was implemented. This is the very definition of co-operative inquiry. It was our research process and how we gathered data and is evidenced in the 'map of the implementation of the research methodology in diagram 3.2'. Chapter 4 summarises the implementation of the research methodology. Appendix 2 provides a complete chronological account of the implementation of the reflection – action – reflection cycle and research findings.

This is the Breaking Down Barriers methodology and, as identified by Diagram 3.1, four additional data gathering activities were introduced by co-inquirers during the life of the inquiry. These activities are recorded in the chronology in Chapter 4 and Appendix 2. Each was led and coordinated by different co-inquirers and took place within and during the life of the co-operative inquiry.

Four Data Gathering Activities Emerged During the Co-operative Inquiry

These four additional data gathering activities were:

1. **Mapping & Profiling**
2. **Performance Information**
3. **Case Studies**
4. **Interviews**

1. Mapping & Profiling

The first action to come out of the initial co-operative inquiry meeting was a desire by co-operative inquirers to know more about fathers in the borough. Consequently co-inquirers designed their own additional, quite traditional, data gathering method to map and profile the needs and services to fathers because they collectively felt this would support the learning process. Reason & Bradbury (2009) and Heron (1986) concur this is indicative of action research. This activity empowered the inquirers energising them to act but it took additional financial resource. The deputy head of Early Years' Services, an ally on the boundary of the co-inquiry, allocated the research project five thousand pounds because he was supportive of the agenda to involve more men in children centre activity. The co-inquirers decided to use this funding to pay for two research assistants on the understanding the evaluation was coordinated by and was part of the co-operative inquiry. The profiling was led and coordinated by different co-inquirers and took place within and during the life of the co-operative inquiry. The two research assistants and all the co-inquirers used a range of approaches to gather information. Co-inquirers invited the research assistants to the second co-operative inquiry where we developed and agreed a methodology. This was a convergent action as all the co-inquirers had agreed to fully support the evaluation. Co-inquirers coordinated and took part in:

- Focus groups with a sample of social workers from the Children-in-Need Service. (In order to gather expert opinion).
- Focus groups with a sample group of fathers and a group of mothers. (In order to gather user opinion).
- A systematic review of paperwork including referral forms, data collection processes as well as published information about services.

The two research assistants recorded and transcribed the data generated from these activities as well as drafted an analysis of current processes and procedures about father engagement across Children Services. This 'raw data' was circulated to co-inquirers one week before the third co-inquiry meeting. (See Part Two data analysis

for further details). Two co-inquirers and one of the research assistants presented their findings from the mapping exercise. We spent the entire third reflective meeting identifying and categorising patterns and agreeing the findings. We concluded Children Social Care and Early Years Services had; failed to include fathers in its service provision. In general the role of fathers was not thought about strategically or operationally. There was no performance or recording of fathers' information, no literature available about services for fathers indeed no services, no training for staff in working with fathers and no culture to include fathers. The evaluation concluded by providing the co-inquiry with seven recommendations for the organisation to become 'father friendly'. These seven recommendations became the seven research aims identified in Chapter 1 and answered in Chapter 10. Again this had an empowering effect on co-inquirers as they felt they were setting the research agenda.

2. **Performance Information**

As the co-operative inquiry developed a performance analyst volunteered to join the inquiry. He became a co-inquirer and he subsequently volunteered to create a reporting methodology to record fathers' involvement in ICS. (This was the first time any Children's Social Care Service in the UK has ever attempted to record fathers' activities using an electronic case file system). A report on this can be located in Chapter 7. The data on father inclusion was drawn between September 2011 and May 2012, (including a retrospective analysis of data from 2009 and 2010), and was analysed during the life of the inquiry as captured in Diagram 3.3 and in the chronology (Chapter 4 and Appendix 2). This new way of recording fathers' involvement in Children Social Care allowed us to develop key performance indicators (KPIs) which co-operative inquirers used, as part of the triangulation of data, to measure whether the activities of the Breaking Down Barriers Project was influencing practice.

3. **Case Studies**

In an early reflective phase one co-inquirer suggested using case studies from the five Child in Need Teams, (where fathers had been included in a social work intervention), as a further method of identifying what constituted inclusive practice. We agreed to regularly converge and bring cases where efforts had been made by social workers to engage and assess fathers. Cases were presented by individual co-inquirers to the group. The group then identified the key practices that led to inclusion of the father in the case work. This was recorded and patterns of good practice were categorised. The case study method had many advantages. It allowed for additional rigour whilst developing well qualified and well-practiced, innovative and exacting inclusive practice. It also developed the co-inquirers' skills because they were becoming experts in including fathers in social work interventions. The case studies were used to initially experiment, revise and improve preliminary theories of father inclusion. The analysis of the case studies, by the co-inquirers, allowed further data to be generated and interpreted. Case study analysis is an understandable and well accustomed model, in our profession, of communication to explain and advance

learning. Case study analysis also symbolised the aims of the project. This method was adopted throughout the inquiry during convergent data gathering episodes of research and is recorded in Chapter 4 and Appendix 2. What resulted was a guide for social workers, managers and organisations in how to include fathers which can be located in Chapter 7. (Baldwin: 2002).

4. Semi-Structured Interviews

A number of co-inquirers felt it would assist learning if we interviewed those social workers and managers who had demonstrated either interest or enthusiasm over the inclusion of fathers. This additional data gathering activity was also suggested by the doctoral supervisors. However, there was little motivation by co-inquirers to undertake this activity. Subsequently I volunteered to complete this task. I settled on a semi-structured interview methodology. I interviewed, as a co-inquirer, 10 practitioners all of whom had demonstrated skills and advanced practice in involving fathers in case work and is recorded in Chapter 4 and Appendix 2. I used the semi-structured method because it is a proven method of gathering data. (Robinson: 1999). Semi-structured interviews are guided, collaborative interactions which are constructed to tap into lived experience. They promote learning, generate new ideas and allow the interviewer to follow new leads and new perspectives whilst striking a balance between interviewer control and natural conversation. The interviews were recorded and transcribed and circulated to all co-inquirers and discussed and analysed, using discourse analysis, (described in Part Two), in a co-inquiry meeting. (Gough & Madill; 2007). The learning was included in the guide for social workers and managers in how to include men in social work practice in Chapter 7.

The findings from each of these four data gathering activities, internal to the co-operative inquiry, were repeatedly and regularly fed back into the co-operative inquiry for discussion and reflection as part of the process of 'research cycling' and later triangulation. The co-operative inquiry and all the research activities acted as one continuous system of 'feedback for analysis'. To summarise and conclude this was the multiple methodology with the co-operative inquiry designed to receive data from a variety of sources throughout its research life. Part two of this paper reviews how all of this data was analysed.

Part Two: How was the Data Analysed?

This section explains how the data was analysed and how the interim and final thematic patterns were identified. A number of analytical tools were employed:

Analytical Frameworks

- **Application of Heron's Framework of Knowing**
- **4 Steps to Making Sense: A Reflective Framework**
- **Triangulation**
- **Discourse Analysis: An Analysis of the Transcripts of Each Co-inquiry**

- **Meeting**
- **Analysis of the Pre and Post Case-file audit**
- **Data from the Co-Inquiry Analysed Externally and fed-back**
- **Sense Making**
- **Ofsted: An Independent Evaluation of the Research**
- **An Example of this Analytical Framework in Application**

1. *Application of Heron's Framework of Knowing*

It is important to explain whose knowing does this research represent. Heron (1996) sights four forms of belief or cognition that structure his analytical framework and exist in a co-operative inquiry. They are:

Heron's Framework of Knowing

- **Propositional**
- **Experiential**
- **Presentational**
- **Practical.**

Each is distinct, each has a specific stage of knowledge and each is interdependent and interrelated empowering one another. Applying these four forms of knowing to the research cycling process within the Breaking Down Barriers Co-operative Inquiry we were able to convert plausible belief at the start of the research into well-grounded knowledge at the end.

These types of belief and knowing are developed, as shown in Diagram 3.3, into a cycle of interconnected mutually supporting concepts, (continually proposed, experienced, practiced and presented during the life of the inquiry), of '*inter-subjective-objective reality*', growing outward as our knowledge and experience are empirically and jointly tested through the action process. (Friedman: 2009). (In this section I repeatedly refer to Chapters 6 and 7 tables 6.1 and 7.1 respectively as both demonstrate the application of the circuit of fourfold knowing supporting the analytical process and assisting the co-inquirers identify the research findings).

Four Cognitive Modes of Knowing

- **Propositional belief is belief that something is the case**
- **Experiential belief is belief in one's dawning sense of presence**
- **Presentational belief is belief in one's intuitive feel for a meaningful pattern**
- **Practical belief is belief in one's developing skills (See Diagram3.3)**

The circuit of fourfold knowing:

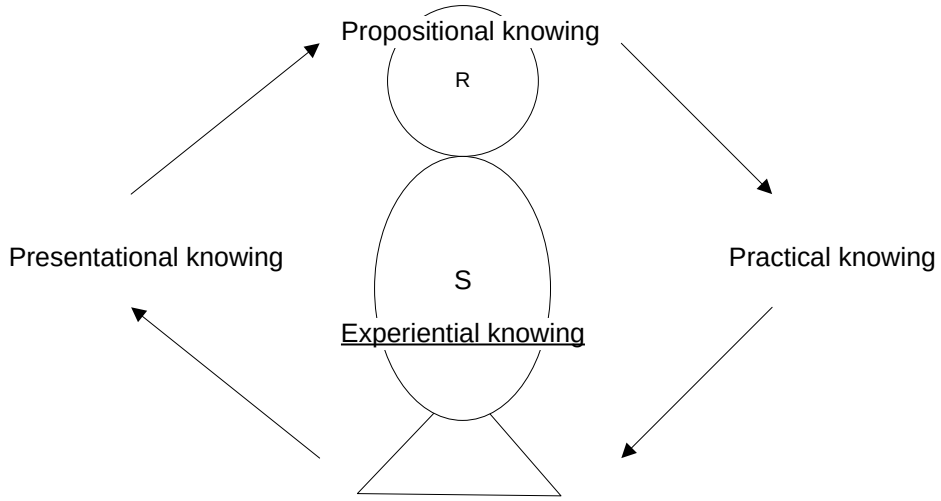
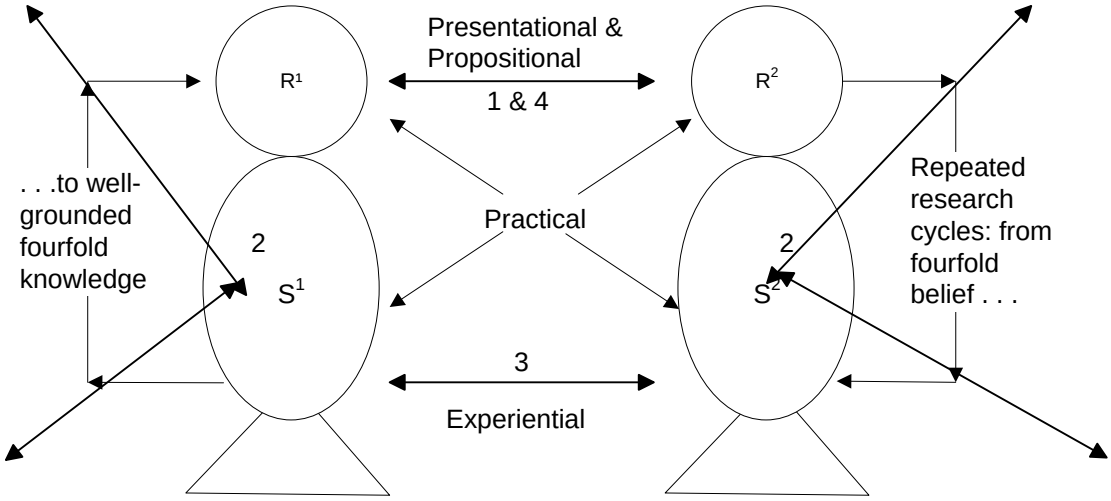


Diagram 3.3 (Heron: 1996).

These four cognitive modes of knowing are applied to the reflection-action-reflection phase of each cycle of cooperative inquiry and are demonstrated in Diagram 3.3 and described below in the four phases of the inquiry.

Full form co-operative enquiry and fourfold epistemological perspective



R^1, R^2 . . . R^n = participants as co-researchers

S^1, S^2 . . .S^n = participants as co-subjects

Co-operative inquiry operates in four cyclical and interconnected phases as is shown in Diagram 3.4. (Heron: 1996).

Phase 1 is the first reflection and planning stage where co-inquirers were focused on areas of investigation. Phase 1 is always a creative process and encourages propositional and presentational belief. In the early stages of the inquiry these

forms of belief were assisting co-inquirers to work with the resistance to the research aims amongst colleagues. This is evidenced in Table 6.1 and discussed in-depth in Chapter 6 see sections 1 to 1.4.

Phase 2 is the action phase. As the co-inquirers grew accustomed to the research cycling simultaneously developing special inquiry skills they developed rudimentary practical beliefs as they experimented and learnt how to include fathers. In Phase 2 the co-inquirers did not yet know the solutions our knowledge, skills and competence as researchers was elementary and provisional but we were learning. This is best observed in the need to keep workers' safe, maintaining focus on domestic violence throughout the project and influencing the organisation's culture and language as identified in Table 6.1 and in the analysis in Chapter 6 sections 3.1 – 3.4.

Phase 3 is the state of deep immersion into the actions of the inquiry. After the first 2 sets of reflection and actions cycles you could see that co-inquirers were becoming fully engaged with their relevant experience, actions and practices and were open to the experience of learning. As Heron (1996: 54) points out; '*this stage is the bedrock, the touchstone of the inquiry process and mainly involves experiential belief*', as the co-inquirers matured as researchers and co-subjects they acquired '*experiential knowledge in the later action phases*'. With experience co-inquirers demonstrated a greater openness to the inquiry topics, they became attuned and empathised with one another and they worked together as a group. This led them to develop '*experiential knowing*' where through action they could state: '*I know what is present when it declares itself to me through my participative compresence with it*'. (Heron: 1996: 54). Experiential belief and knowing relates to transformations of practice brought about by one's involvement in that transformation. The case study analysis that resulted in the good practice guide is a good example of this and can be located in Chapter7. Simply put they knew they had brought about change because of their direct experience. Experiential knowing was first located in the thematic pattern at the point of 'critical mass' which I first identify in Table 6.1 and discuss in detail in Chapter 6 section 4 – 4.4. However this is best evidenced in Chapter 7 and Table 7.1 because it is in the later stages of the inquiry where there is much greater experiential knowing.

Phase 4 is the second reflection phase where co-inquirers make sense of their initial reflections and plans (again see Diagram 3.4). There is an interaction and 'chemistry' here between the co-inquirers presentational and propositional processes as they have the reference points of practice and experience. This interaction then leads into the next cycle of reflective discussions and plans deepening the experiential and practical forms of knowing in the following action phase. And the cycle of action, reflection and deepening knowing continues throughout the research.

It is this cyclical interaction between Heron's Framework of Knowing which shifts the co-inquirers opening set of beliefs to concluding knowledge. By varying subject and technique as the research cycle is repeated twelve times, in this case, the four forms of belief metamorphose into four forms of knowing. As Heron (1996: 55) concluded;

'*It is the grounding of the practical, propositional, presentational and experiential knowledge on each other, as they are brought repeatedly to bear upon each other in a variety of forms of a series of cycles, that makes the research outcomes well-founded, with a well formed warrant to lay claim to knowledge*'.

This is how we as the Breaking Down Barriers Co-operative Inquiry identified the Thematic Pattern when Attempting to Include Fathers as discussed in detail in Chapters 6 and 7. The entire process is symbolized in Diagram 3.1 and 3.2 and evidenced in the Chronology of the Research Implementation in Appendix 2.

Co-inquirers gathered together for three hours every six weeks to reflect on individual and collective actions. In order to maximise the time we adopted a structure to each meeting that provided each co-operative inquiry meeting with a reflective framework which supported further analysis:

2. ***4 Steps to Making Sense; A Reflective Framework***

I place a lot of importance on what observations, deliberations and findings are generated from the reflection meetings. We used a four step analytical framework during the three hour meetings to report, collate and review data and integrate this into Heron's Framework of Knowing to make sense and reach agreement.

Four Steps to Making Sense: A Reflective Framework

- **Description**
- **Evaluation**
- **Explanation**
- **Application**

- **Description**

In part one each inquirer describes their activities and their perceptions of the outcomes from their identified actions from the previous action phase.

- **Evaluation**

Co-inquirers evaluated how accurate their descriptions were during the second part of the reflection phase. Co-inquirers continually asked themselves are they [their descriptions] grounded in the recalled experience of the action phase. Co-inquirers filtered, collated and cultivated their reflections on their action with the support of other co-inquirers to deconstruct tacit conceptual constructs and projections. These were then reviewed against the inquiry's aims, objectives and propositions and categorised against the research aims to identify patterns of relationship among them. Throughout this process the group were testing out alternative theories that would promote inclusive systems and practice. As part of the evaluation stage we

continually asked ourselves: Would an alternative system or viewpoint be more relevant or offer a more coherent fit with practice? During this evaluation process experiential presentational and propositional forms of knowing were being experimented with for collective consistency, rationality and logic. (See Heron's Framework for Knowing in the previous section). Findings from previous research cycles were included during this evaluation stage.

- **Explanation**

In part three of the reflection phase we applied explanatory reflection which is a more considered form of thought process which identified and constructed theory on the basis of evaluation. The group used the following categories in the reflection phase:

- Holistic thinking allowed the group to describe their thoughts and relate them using systems theory most notably to identify patterns of organisation and then classify how each part interacted with the whole, detecting the dynamic sequences of emergence, the dynamic reciprocal influence and, towards the later stages of the co-inquiry, vertical and horizontal system wide patterning. See Chapter 9 for an analysis of the research using systemic theory.
- Hermeneutic thinking, which I found particularly relevant to this Children's Social Care Department, as it related thinking and emergence of findings with, in this case, organisational cultural, organisational history, organisational norms, beliefs and ways of working and the impact these concepts have on human behaviour within the organisation.
- A-perspectival thinking offers the explanation that no perspective is final, that each opinion is comparative to its context and that each context is comparative to its context and so forth.

The group adopted two techniques in developing explanatory reflection. Firstly, findings were categorised as provisional, obscure, uncertain and unknown. Secondly, the group were encouraged to be free in their thinking and consider as many diverse perspectives as possible especially in the early stages of the research process. For example; two co-inquirers would regularly email me after reflective meetings with additional points they had identified.

- **Application**

In this final stage of reflection co-inquirers suggested which aspects needed investigation in the next action phase and agreed on what investigatory methods would be used. Learning from the previous research cycles, as well as the transfer of informal learning from one cycle to the next became increasingly apparent during the application stage as the co-inquirers matured through experience.

The challenge for the group was in distinguishing and recognizing and then categorizing the learning from the previous action phase. (This increased experience

and led to increasingly conscious application of the Four Steps to Analysis in this reflective framework validating further the findings).

During the action phase, co-inquirers used what Heron (1996) termed '*radical memory*' recording at the point of identification and action. Also during the action phase, co-inquirers recorded their 'radical memory' and their actions through presentational and propositional forms, for example; in reflective diaries as well as through email or in minutes of formal meetings.

We then collated and categorised all individual accounts of what was significant which we identified as a group. The group facilitator would lead the identification and agreement as to what was similar and what was different. From this the group would agree meaningful patterns amongst those similarities and differences. In the first three steps, (radical memory, recording and presenting), it is the individual co-inquirer who is progressively identifying significant categories from their experience. It is in this fourth and final step of collation where we sort agreement about what was significant although there was never any intention for regular agreement in all areas as this negates individual differences and subjective / objective realities. It was also dependent on the degree of divergence and convergence operated in the method. In this research there was some significant overlap mainly through the case file analysis, the concept of critical mass, data and the development of social work practice. When we met after the co-inquiry had ended we identified an overlap in gender and power as explained in Chapters 6 and 7.

For example; In relation to the mapping and profiling of current practices the facilitator led a discussion to identify the key themes and from this we developed a father friendly strategy that became seven of the research aims identified in Chapter 1. This process is explained in Chapter 5.

A further example; In relation to ICS we all analysed the data as a group. We then agreed what should be recorded and we developed KPIs. This is explained in Chapter 7.

A further example; In relation to the case studies we collectively agreed the key learning points / techniques and skills that led to that father being engaged. This is explained in Chapter 7.

A final example; in relation to the semi-structured interviews The discourses were grouped together and then presented by four co-inquirers to the wider group for further discussion and agreement.

3. Triangulation

Triangulation was an inevitable consequence of the design of the methodology. Triangulation refers to the use of more than one method to investigate a research question. The multiple method explained above provides this research with enhance confidence in the findings. In this research we employed two forms of triangulation:

1. *Investigator triangulation where we used a number of co-inquirers to gather and interpret data*.
2. *Methodological triangulation where we used more than one method to gather data*.

We then used triangulation as a mechanism to enhance the credibility and persuasiveness of this research account by using the co-operative inquiry as a vehicle to analyse a large amount of data that was being fed into it. We also used this model to reflect on the emergent findings generated by external analysis [external to the inquiry]. We used one other form of analysis to further support the identification of findings.

4. *Discourse Analysis: An Analysis of the Transcripts of Each Co-operative Inquiry Meeting*

This research relied upon analytical frameworks associated with discourse analysis to analyse each transcript from the co-inquiry and the ten interviews. The transcripts were shared independently with all co-inquirers during the inquiry and discussions and reflections were held during reflective meetings. Six of us then met twice for two rounds of reflection to verify and refine the discourses we had identified. (There were three particular difficulties impacting on the quality of collaborative analysis. We experienced some delay in having the tapes of the meetings transcribed, the pressure of other work meant that only 6 of the co-inquirers were available to then analyse the delayed transcripts after the inquiry had finished and I had a very limited capacity to analyse the data during the life of the inquiry. It was only when I was able to immerse myself in the data during a month's annual leave in April 2011 I was truly able to identify additional themes and locate other findings which were then shared and agreed, after the co-inquiry had concluded, with co-inquirers).

We identified discourses using an analytical conceptual framework which drew upon 'macro' discourses or ways of thinking such as; gender, fatherhood, masculinity, childhood, social constructism, psychoanalysis and difference. We then inter-related these with the 'micro' discourses of language such as in conversations about violence, equality, fear, as this is demonstrated in 'talk'. We collected all of these themes together and met to agree what discourses were present in the transcripts and what could be selected for research conclusions. (Speer: 2005, McDowell & Pringle: 1996). (I structured Chapters 6 and 7 using these discourses as sub-headings to further evidence the implementation of the analytical framework).

The analytical conceptual framework adopts what Walker, (1988) echoing Foucault (1979), asserts that macro discourses, (varieties of knowledge such as culture, ethics, values and political ideas), are replicated in micro discourse (talk) 'at the point of articulation'. Macro and micro discourses are discovered and examined through the analysis of conversation and word assembly. It is important to recognise the power of 'talk in action' in the co-operative inquiry. Discourse analysis is used to consider ways of thinking about particular phenomena such as men, parenthood, and

motherhood and then places this into a political context such as social work. (Ashley et al; 2006).

Macro and micro discourses are discovered and examined through the analysis of conversation. Discourse analysis has been used to consider ways of thinking about particular phenomena such as defence against anxiety, technology, and practice and then placed this thinking into the political context and policy arena of social work and paternal alienation. I have adopted the ten stages in the analysis of discourse as recommended by Potter & Whetherall. (1987). By scrutinising the ideas and discourses that are generated about including fathers in social work interventions patterns and variance were identified through the participants' constructions of modern concepts of practice and applied to the constructions of fathers and their inclusion in social work. This analysis could be useful when contrasting discourses operating in co-inquirers' minds with the hypothesis generated from the literature that fathers are pathologised as violent and absent. The identified discourses were then presented to 50% of co-inquirers on two occasions to further clarify the discourses operating and legitimising the research design. (Potter; 1997). This analytical framework generated the reflections and findings in Chapters 5 to 7.

The Ten Stages in the Analysis of Discourse

Stage 1 The research questions are broadly related to construction, function and what is achieved by this construction. (Chapter 1)
Stage 2 A small sample group of co-inquirers / practitioners.
Stage 3 A macro and micro conceptual theoretical position is taken (Chapter 2)
Stage 4 Co-inquiry reflective meetings allow for the active intervention by the researcher as a co-inquiry and research initiator. (Chapters 4 – 7)
Stage 5 Transcriptions. (Chapters 6-7)
Stage 6 Inclusive categorising and coding to identify a body of instances, patterns and variances. (Identification of discourses at this stage). (Chapters 6-7)
Stage 7 The analysis studies the coding looking for patterns in the data, nuance, incongruities and areas of vagueness. Analysis then reviews function and consequence. For example; I searched for patterns of consistencies and variance through the same action. This approach developed a great deal of variability on many levels but also a great deal of uniformity. (Further identification of discourses at this stage). (Chapters 6-7)
Stage 8 To further validate the analytical framework, I evidence coherence from the analytical claims in the literature review and linked these to the discourse found in the transcripts. I identify new problems and develop the concept of 'fruitfulness' in making sense of new kinds of discourse. (Chapters 6-7 & 10)
(For the purpose of rigour stages 6 & 7 were reviewed in supervision).
Stage 9 I reported my interpretations and identified discourses to the co-inquirers. Following discussion I then wrote Chapters 6 and 7 and then circulated this to the co-inquirers as the report constitutes part of the confirmation and validation

procedures itself.
Stage 10 I will popularize the findings to demonstrate application.
(Potter and Wetherell 1987).
➢

5. Analysis of Pre & Post-Case File Audit

The data from the pre and post-case file audits were recorded anonymously onto a pre-designed multinomial electronic model using an Excel spread sheet and calculations made using Excel. Six co-inquirers meet and analysed the spreadsheets. Using the same process as described above as to how we secured agreement in co-operative inquiry meetings we identified a range of findings that can be located in Chapter 8.

6. Data from the Co-Inquiry Analysed Externally and fed-back

I was offered a number of external opportunities to analyse the data generated by this multiple methodology. Throughout the life of the inquiry I shared all externally generated reflections which were also categorised by co-inquiries using the analytical framework explained above. A range of analytical activity took place a few months after the conclusion of the inquiry and so to maintain pure to the methodology I arranged two additional reflective meetings implementing Heron's Framework of Knowing to reflect on the additional analysis. In both meetings 6 former co-inquirers attended. The findings were also emailed to all co-inquirers.

➢ *Group supervision*

The method of group supervision, discussion and reflection with other final year doctoral students played a significant part in identifying and developing my understanding of roles, functions and gender as well as to share and discuss earlier writings. This was a useful space to consider gender and research methods. I think group supervision, as Trowell and Rustin (1991) have written, contained me and gave me the resources to think more laterally whilst also a space to reflect over my feelings and experiences. In this group I shared Chapters 6 and 7 and presented the data from the pre and post-case file audits.

➢ *Tripartite Supervision with both Doctoral Supervisors*

This supervision allowed for sophisticated and enthusiastic interaction where we developed a regular, open reflexive process allowing us to construct an informed reality for the research. This formal supervision proved critical in placing 'myself' within the research, in identifying themes, (as they both had some distance from the project), in supporting the emergence of key themes and in shaping this thesis. For example; we watched and listened (in April 2011) to a recording of the October 2010 co-operative inquiry meeting. Both my supervisors observed that for the first thirty minutes the female co-inquirers in the group remained silent. A fact I had completely missed. They asked me to reflect and read up as to the complexities of this silence

which then opened my mind, (and others), to the complexities surrounding gender which I deconstruct in Chapters 6 and 7.

- ***Peer Support***

Twenty managers and colleagues, as well as over seventy social workers, were asked for feedback and reflections following discussions about father involvement and the project's initiatives in team meetings, following presentations, at two different conferences and three lectures. I received many different contributions from different perspectives and interest groups many of which have been incorporated into this thesis.

- ***A Research Journal***

Keeping a research journal for three years encouraged me to gather data creatively as I reflected on the research process with my own thinking treated as secondary data and then circulated to others for further interpretation. It was an on-going resource I could share with other co-inquirers. I kept my ideas and developed the structure for the final report as well as role-modelling, to other inquirers, the importance of keeping a research journal.

The perspectives and insights generated from this external analysis was fed back to the co-inquiry either in written or verbal form. Co-inquirers then categorised the data into findings using the analytical framework described above.

7. Sense-making

The final part of the analysis came in writing up the thesis as the learning was further triangulated, catalogued and further reflection was recorded. This was in itself a significant emergent and iterative process as the validity of the method is located in how the thesis is structured and how the findings are presented. (Yorks et al; 2007). Heron (1998) and Bradbury and Reason (2009) recommend a particular structure to write up a co-operative inquiry. This structure is as follows:

1. Relevant information about the initiating researcher, including prior experience (Chapter 1)
2. A brief account of the background of the inquiry, how and why it has come into being, how the inquiry topic was recognised and its status prior to the research activity. (Chapter 1 and 2)
3. Details about the methodology. (Chapter 3).
4. Details about methods of recruiting co-inquirers, details about the contract of participation, the induction processes and details of co-inquirers (gender, age, ethnicity etc). (Chapter 5)
5. An account of the inquiry topic was processed at the first reflection meeting and how it was shaped into a launching focus for the whole inquiry. (Chapter 5).

6. A summary story of all the research cycles and a resume of what went on and ongoing fate of the launching proposal. (Chapter 5 - 7)
7. Information about the overall pattern within and between research cycles in relation to divergence and convergence (Chapter 6 and 7).
8. The story of inquiry initiation and the move from dependency to independence:
    - Genuine co-ownership of the method
    - Authentic collaboration
    - Emotional and interpersonal competence (Chapters 6 - 7)
9. An account of the validity of the inquiry and a sampling of co-inquirers stories (Chapters 4 – 7 & 10)
10. An account of the outcomes of the inquiry (Chapters 4, 8, 9 and 10). (Heron: 1998: 102 – 103).

Once I added further analysis from these external activities I circulated a draft of Chapters 5, 6 and 7 to all the co-inquirers for comment. I then arranged for us to meet so I could receive their feedback. Six attended an hour long meeting where I asked them to comment on the initial and final draft themes identified through this multiple analytical process. We again adopted Heron's Framework to structure the analysis. Co-inquirers raised a number of minor observations mainly in relation to the use of language but agreed the findings. Two weeks later I circulated a final draft of Chapters 6 and 7 and a first draft of Chapter 10. I received email feedback from four former co-inquirers that they were satisfied with how I had articulated the final analysis and findings. The validity procedures further supported analytical rigour. (See final section).

8. OFSTED: An Independent Evaluation of the Research

There was an additional activity that acted to independently evaluate the research. Between January and February 2012 Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission conducted a two week Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services. The methodology of the inspection was:

The inspection team consisted of four of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one inspector from the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The inspection was carried out under the Children Act 2004. The evidence evaluated by inspectors included:

Discussions with children and young people receiving services, front line staff and managers, senior officers including the Director of Children's Services and the Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, elected members and a range of community representatives.

Analysing and evaluating reports from a variety of sources including a review of the Children and Young Peoples' Plan, performance data, information from the inspection of local settings such as schools and day care provision and the evaluations of serious case reviews undertaken by Ofsted in accordance with Working Together To Safeguard Children' 2010.

A review of 69 case files of children and young people with a range of needs. This provided a view of services over time and the quality of reporting, recording and decision making undertaken.

The outcomes of the most recent annual unannounced inspection of local authority contact, referral and assessment services.

Interviews and focus groups with front line professionals, managers and senior staff from NHS.

A Summary of the Analytical Process

To summarise; Part Two has explained that the co-operative inquiry adopted a range of methods to analyse the vast amount of data collected during the life of the research. Data was analysed using Heron's Framework of Knowing and a 4 point reflective framework, used during each reflective meeting, to categorise findings. Transcripts from each co-inquiry were analysed using discourse analysis by co-inquirers. The findings were then triangulated with data drawn from the case-file audit and data generated from ICS and further 'sense made' from external analytical processes which were fed back to co-inquirers for further categorisation.

10 *An Example of this Analytical Framework in Application*

I provide below an example of how the co-operative inquiry went about thematic selection.

During the action phases, co-inquirers used what Heron's terms '*radical memory*' recording, (in reflective diaries as well as through email or in minutes of formal meetings), at the point of identification and action. We found this fundamental as co-inquirers took notice, or to use Heron's (1996) parlance; 'paid heed' identifying themes from their and others actions. Examples of co-inquirers use of radical memory in shaping the research findings:

1. One co-inquirer wrote an email stating; '*I sat in an initial child protection conference this morning and no one asked about the man. Why could we not use the ICPC to plan to engage fathers especially where there is domestic violence?*' This was brought to a reflective meeting where another co-inquirer, who happened to chair child protection conferences, agreed to discuss what system changes could be made in conferences so there was always a question about the inclusion of the father. Consecutively this led to the further identification of professionals being silent about fathers.
2. Another co-inquirer brought their journal to a reflective meeting and asked; '*do we keep data on fathers'*? We identified we did not but it was a

project aim. A co-inquirer was recruited who happened to work within the performance team. He then constructed a reporting methodology described in Chapter 7.

3. Another co-inquirer wrote in her journal; '*I am frightened of intervening with men because I am scared of being physically and or sexually attacked*'. She bravely discussed her fear in a co-operative inquiry meeting. These feelings were shared by many other co-inquirers. As a direct action we designed a safety planning process for staff which we presented to the senior management team and was implemented. The need to ensure staff safety became a founding recommendation of the thesis.

During the reflection phase co-inquirers would then explicitly present their individual interpretations and their records to the group allowing for '*inter-subjective*' testing by the group who processed the material, selecting themes and categories. This is how the co-inquiry began to develop an initial thematic pattern as recorded in Chapter6. In the first three stages co-inquirers were continually recognizing and classifying important themes through a balanced interplay between presentational (written) and propositional (verbal) forms of data. (Friedman: 2009).

The group collected and agreed on what was significant and noteworthy, from individual co-inquirers explanations, interpretations and categorisations using the decision-making process identified above. This was how themes and eventually the research findings were identified within the co-operative inquiry.

The richness in the data is discovered from categorization, pattern identification, (no matter how divergent the individual co-inquirers actions have been), in order that diverse perspectives amongst co-inquirers coalesce so agreement is reached to enlighten the inquiry. The group then agreed on what needed to be further explored through further actions and what categories were intermediate or final outputs or outcomes and which contributed to the change process.

Part Three: The Co-operative Inquiry as a Social Science

Part three describes the implementation of the method and the mechanics of the research process.

1. *The Community of Inquiry within the Community of Practice (Type of Inquiry)*

The, (Breaking Down Barriers), co-operative inquiry was '*internally initiated*' because I am an employee of the organisation as well as a '*research practitioner*'. (A description of establishing the co-inquiry can be located in Chapter 5).

The inquiry is '*full form'* meaning all co-inquirers are completely involved as both co-researchers and co-subjects, equally working together in the action and reflection phases allowing for the greatest degree of stimulus between and within the phases. (Heron: 1996).

This co-operative inquiry is a '*same role inquiry*' meaning all the co-inquirers have the same role; they are qualified social workers and are researching a particular aspect of social work practice. The research is also classified as an *outside inquiry* because co-inquirers, as a group, are making their inquiries within the wider organisation. The implication of this is that co-inquirers unite 'in concert' during the reflection phases to impart experience, share data, deconstruct the information, adjust thinking, identify themes and patterns and then plan the next action phase as described in Chapter 6 and 7. (Heron: 1996).

This inquiry is further distinguished as being an '*open boundaried inquiry*' as the research is concerned with not only the experience of the group but with the interaction and impact, individual co-inquirers and the group, have on social work practice within the organisation. As the inquiry evolved, it became crucial to involve partner agencies. (Heron & Reason: 2009).

These conditions were needed to create a forum where practitioners could build and test theories of practice with the aim of learning.

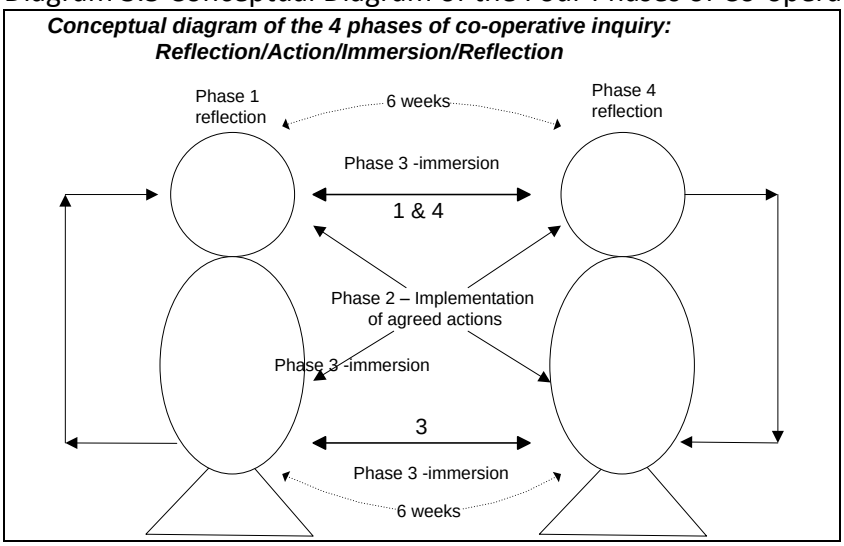
2. *Length of Inquiry*

In relation to the '*length of the inquiry*' the group considered the complexity of the research and practice area being studied, the aims of the inquiry and the length of time needed to encourage transformational change. The demands of the inquiry also needed to be balanced with the competing priorities of co-inquirers statutory responsibilities.

The group decided on the best ratio of six weekly cycles to undertake and complete the action phase with a three hour reflection phase. Arguably, with so much activity undertaken within those six weeks, three hours is only a limited period in which to reflect over so much generated data. However, it was important to be pragmatic, recognise the privilege of being able to undertake this research and design a reflective space that maximised the three hours by carefully structuring and preparing each reflection phase as previously described. Diagram 3.4 illustrates the cyclical process between reflection – action – immersion – reflection that defines the BDB co-operative inquiry.

To maximise opportunities for reflection the co-inquiry adopted an Apollonian methodology which provides a structure to the reflective phases and subsequently enhances validity, (see next section). Much informal reflection occurred during the course of the 6 weekly action cycles including regular email communication updating inquirers on events and informal discussions. The project was also discussed during the formal supervision process for co-inquirers.

Diagram 3.5 Conceptual Diagram of the Four Phases of Co-operative Inquiry



3. *An Apollonian Culture*

The BDB inquiry incorporates an intentional use of logic in what Nietzsche (1872) termed 'an Apollonian peculiarity' defined in this context by its: 'rational, linear, systematic and explicit approach to the process of cycling between reflection and action'. An Apollonian method employs a logical cycle of progress and emergence with each reflection stage analysing the last action stage using the learning to develop emergent practice and plan for the next action stage. This method is consistent with the organisational culture where the research took place and ameliorated the limited amount of time for reflection. (Kemmis; 2009). This is the logical cycle of sequenced steps; plan, act, observe and reflect then re-plan. By utilising an Apollonian culture the inquiry systematically tested different theories of practice by combining interpretation with rigorous verification. (Heron & Reason: 2009 p144).

With its 'proceduralised' and systemised ways of working the Children-in-Need Service already exhibited Apollonian research propensities meaning this way of thinking and working were relatively straightforward to imbed within the inquiry. I did not want to develop a rigid culture of reflection as I was keen to encourage impromptu, creative and expressive forms of reflection, again to encourage emergence. Subsequently, and with inspiration from Trevleaven's (1994) inquiry experience, a Dionysian component was built into the reflective cycle to encourage unrehearsed and animated spontaneity and creativity by integrating improvisation and inventiveness across a number of cycles of action and reflection again to encourage emergence. The freedom of the Dionysian culture allows ideas to germinate and emerge in the action cycles although a creative tension always existed between these very different ways of thinking and 'being'. (Charles & Glennie: 2002). The reflection cycles adopted elements of both methods allowing for a balance between preplanning and emergence although the emphasis remained towards an Apollonian structure. (Heron & Reason: 2009).

4. *Divergence and Convergence*

The cycles of action were both divergent, (co-inquirers undertaking individual actions), and convergent, (co-inquirers undertaking collective actions or testing out a practice method or a system change), between and within the action phases. This allowed for a huge selection of potential research designs. The community of inquiry adopted an intermediate model of divergent and convergent action depending on the stage of the inquiry. For example; the first two action phases co-inquirers converged on co-ordinating, facilitating, contributing to and supporting the research method and data generation in partnership with the two Fatherhood Institute researcher assistants as explained in Chapter 5 where we piloted the first reflection – action reflection cycle. This was emergent, unintended and unforeseen by the author and led by the co-operative inquirers.

In periods of convergence the group studied and experimented with the same part of practice, (e.g. inviting men to child protection conferences or identifying, presenting and reflecting on case studies where fathers had been successfully engaged). The co-inquirers quickly moved to divergence as their different functions within the hierarchy allowed them to experiment with different practice and theories during the action phases.

I was keen to encourage divergence early on, as experience from other co-operative inquires informs that this builds a foundation for later emergence of well-grounded convergence by drawing up individual conceptual maps which are shared with other co-inquirers. This strategy also encouraged conceptual convergence. (See Chapter 7 '*the grey area*' as an example). (Baldwin: 2002, Mead: 2002 and Reason: 2002).

Early divergence encourages individual co-inquirer's levels of motivation, participation, creativity, individualism, individual uniqueness and initiative. This then allows co-inquirers to determine their unique identities whilst recognising their individual contribution to the project. This distinctiveness is crucial for validity as individual co-inquirers need the confidence to supportively challenge and experiment with one another's' ideas. The coordination and completion of the mapping and profiling in the first three co-operative inquiries gave co-inquirers this confidence. Heron and Reason (2009 and 1981) argue that allowing greater divergence encourages chaos and a richer convergence and subsequently greater emergence, transformation and therefore validity. This position supported creating alternatives to the status quo of father exclusion because co-inquirers individually and collectively identified new practice initiatives.

From early divergence the cycles of action moved to a more intermediate position diverging to the edge of chaos and then converging into a higher order of complexity as described by Lewin (1993) during the middle of his inquiry's action phases. This pattern is also evident in Chapter 9's systemic analysis. During the latter stages of the inquiry, (see Chapter 7), co-inquirers converged more and more in the action phases in order to refine '*the whole and its parts*', combining interpretation with rigorous testing, drawing up conceptual maps in the reflection phases which

established an extensive variety of perspectives on the same subject. This led to further conceptual convergence.

5. Research Cycling

As I have already identified research cycling is fundamental to co-operative inquiry logic. Research cycling, in this context, means replication, procedural uniformity and transparency. Each cycle is an overlay of one cycle on the next and evidences the application of Friedman's third distinguishing feature; rigorous testing. The group performed the same experiment over and over until a theory is well established and ready for application. As Pawson (2006: 41) puts it, '*replication is judged to be the source of scientific certitude*'. The other benefit of research cycling is the application of procedural uniformity.

6. Transformational Inquiry

This inquiry has a transformational intent. The inquiry encouraged:

- Transformation in the co-inquirers own internal worlds by engaging in the process of the inquiry. (Maguire: 2002).
- Propositional reports which describe the co-operative inquiry method, process and evidence of transformational learning in our 'near environments'. The actions and learning are grounded in every day practice and how the learning is shared by feeding back externally (from the group) throughout the organisation, amongst partners and across the profession further evolving the notion of communities of learning. (Mead: 2002, Maguire; 2002 and Baldwin: 2002).
- Co-inquirers develop their individual practical skills and knowledge. (Baldwin: 2002).
- To clarify, complex practice and complex systems, the inquiry adopted anecdotal methods notably case studies which demonstrated good inclusive social work practice, within a propositional framework, recounting the relationship between the individual case and the broader theories of inclusion. (Friedmann's second distinguishing feature). (Baldwin: 2002).

7. Recording

There are four primary functions of data gathering in a co-operative inquiry:

- For each co-inquirer to supply information about the experience of implementation
- To record the outcome of every action
- To devise and prepare information about oneself as a co-inquirer
- Recording data about one another when their actions coincide or where they are jointly involved in actions. (Reason & Bradbury: 2009).

Every reflective phase was recorded through video and digital audio electronic devices and agreed actions were recorded during the reflective meeting to enable the actions to be circulated within 48 hours. Draft transcripts of the reflective sessions were circulated to co-inquirers fourteen days after the previous reflective phase for comment and alteration. The recording of the inquiry supported the structure of inquiry, evidenced process whilst also progressed and facilitated reflection. (Baldwin: 2002).

To different degrees co-inquirers chose to keep reflective diaries to record their experiences of experimentation. Co-inquirers recorded what they felt relevant, practicable and sustainable. Co-inquirers were also encouraged to email reflections. As the co-inquirers generated their own data about their perceptions and experience they recorded them retrospectively. Below are six anonymised examples taken, with their permission, from co-inquirers' reflective diaries.

1. '*We talked about involving fathers in the team meeting today. A lot of the team were pretty cynical and there was quite a negative conversation about men in general you know always violent and abusive and better that they just stay away. Funny but I can't help but agree with much of what was said and I am part of this project!!'*

2. *'I met this man today and it is alleged he has sexually abused his step-daughter. I couldn't look at the guy and I just wanted to leave as soon as I got there. I just hated him'.*

3. '*Bloody men he has hit her again and what does she do stay and blame herself. Gavin talks about the importance of finding and working with these men but a lot of the time I think we should just help these women leave them*'.

4. '*I went on a home visit today and remembered what we agreed at the last group meeting and I asked the mother about the children's father. She initially said he was not involved. When I spoke to the older child (alone) she told me her dad had given her the pens we were using to draw with. So later I went downstairs and spoke to the mother and asked her again about the father. She admitted he was around but did not want to involve him because there was a warrant out for his arrest. If I wasn't involved in this project I am not sure I would have spoken to the mother again as after all he is not why we are involved*.'

5. '*I have spent the day authorising assessments which is probably why I have found the time to write in this diary'. 'I know it's my team but most of the SWs are definitely including the father or certainly asking the question and when he is not involved most are recording the lengths they have gone to locate him. Yes the usual suspects are still not doing it but that would be for any initiative we try. What I have noticed though is that it's all very well identifying these men but with no perpetrator programme and so little services for men it is difficult to know what to do next especially when so many of my team don't know how to talk to men. We need services and more training. I'll put these points to the project at our next meeting*.'

6. '*I have had a great day today. This little girl [aged 5] has been Looked After for five months but today, despite objections from the guardian she moved in with her dad. The court were really pleased with my assessment of the father and the support package my manager agreed*'.

However, any written record is secondary to the co-inquirers primary tool for data generation that of memory. Non-inquirers, on the boundary of the inquiry were, on occasion, providing a written record of observations, reports, performance information and ideas for further exploration. For example; one social worker and manager Maggie (not her real name) enthusiastically supported the research aims. She would regularly provide examples of cases where she had undertaken direct work to engage fathers, challenge fathers over abusive behaviours or identify problems and barriers to inclusion. In each case I kept a record of our conversation, details of the cases she identified and I interviewed her. (see semi-structured interviews in Part 2). I also reviewed the case notes she had recorded and quote these in this thesis. Below are three anonymised examples taken, with Maggie's permission, of her activities:

1. '*I shouldn't keep the case open really as threshold for social care intervention is no-longer met but every now and again he just needs help*'. [Maggie is referring to a case where a recovering heroin addict and father was caring for two of his own children and one step child whilst the month served a fifteen year prison sentence for drug importation].

2. '*I attended court today and supported this man's application for a residence order for the children. We are all confident he can do it but the court were resistant they just saw a Black man who had a history of violence but he is an excellent father and a much better parent than the mother*.'

3. *'I have recruited another man to my team; we now have three male social workers and I know this makes a difference to the team dynamic, to other social workers attitudes and it provides a better balance in the team. I am going to support one of them to work on the Caring Dads project.'*

Part Four: The Legitimacy of the Method, Validity and Reliability

I explore here the rationality, cogency, soundness and validity of the research methodology.

a. Generalisability, Reliability and Replication

This research enquiry non-literally replicates three current research methodologies, adopted by scholars as part of the Fathers Matters 3 Project for the Family Rights Group as we took steps to implement their recommendations. The research is further supported by a Department of Education funded pilot co-ordinated by the Fatherhood Institute to develop systems and practices to engage men in the child protection process.

The nature of subjective / objective reality means exact replication and generalisability of the research is inconsistent as no two co-operative inquiries are the same. Indeed, social interventions are complex because they are attempting to make complex changes within already highly complex adaptive systems. Indeed, Pawson (2006) argues that no intervention is ever implemented the same way twice. The method, data gathering techniques and makeup of the group are all particular to the context in which the inquiry operates. In addition, the process of change is constant and so systems are always subject to modification and transformation.

The co-operative inquiry is accessible for non-literal replication by being available for '*creative metamorphoses*'. It is likely the transformational outcome will be of interest to colleagues elsewhere and the underlying politics of oppression and a lack of participation will resonate with other social work organisations. The results of this study will be considered valid when other researchers feel the methodology is rigorous and trustworthy enough to quote in their own work and the model applicable to other Children Social Care environments. (McIntyre; 2008).

Nine Masters social work students and three doctoral student, (from different universities), have interviewed me and used much of Chapters 2 and the 2009 original research for background information as they develop their own small research activities focused on father inclusion (for example: the role of foster fathers, another; increasing the numbers of fathers attending child protection conferences). Academics from the Fatherhood Institute, the Family Rights Group and from three universities have requested copies of this thesis to inform their current

research on father involvement as have Ofsted and the DfE legitimising the research methodology. Three other universities have asked me to contribute to specific projects on father engagements.

In terms of replicating the research this is complex as exact replication is not possible. The same intervention replicated in other Local Authorities will achieve both success and failures because the many competing variables (for example; the personal biographies of those taking part, the organisational history and culture), will have a significant impact in other inquiries. Despite this, this thesis is written to advance practice and the remaining chapters, in part, guides others in what to prepare for, what to do and importantly what not to do.

b. *Ethics Approval*

My paramount concern was that no participant is harmed in any way from participating in the research process. However there was some delay in receiving ethical approval. An application to the Ethics Committee of the University of East London was made in 2009 however due to a breakdown of communication and systems between the Tavistock and East London University the application was 'lost'. When this loss was identified I sort retrospective ethical agreement by:

- *Obtaining signed consent forms from each individual that took part in the study*
- *I submitted a 14 page essay evidencing how the thesis conformed to the required ethical standard of UEL and the Tavistock (available upon request)*
- *I had my employing organisation's permission and full support to undertake the research*
- *During the research I was able to evidence that we had adopted the Caldicott Principles of Confidentiality and that the research was enshrined in the ethics of the British Association of Social Work (BASW) and, at the time, the General Social Care Council (GSCC).*

These frameworks allowed us to address subjects such as; informed consent, anonymity, over-disclosure and data protection. Despite this, ethical dilemmas were highlighted during the course of the research which I addressed in Chapters 5 – 7 as well as via the validity agreement (see next section) and participation agreement (Appendix 3).

I received final ethical approval from the University of East London's Research Ethics Committee in January 2014. See Appendix 6.

c. *An Inside Researcher*

Before progressing further it is important to acknowledge that the co-operative inquirers were all 'insider researchers'. The expression `insider research' is used to

describe research where the researcher has an explicit involvement or association with the research setting. (Robson: 2002). Research, such as this mixed methodology diverges from traditional notions of scientifically sound research where the researcher is an `objective outsider' examining subjects external to his / herself. Denzin & Lincoln: 2000. As professionals we have completed a study of our own practices and work setting; this is also termed '*practitioner research*'. The co-operative inquiry was a collaborative research effort and as such we were all actively involved in carrying out research. (See Titchen quoted in Jarvis 1999). The concern is for the `*blurring of boundaries*' between researchers and researched which causes allegations of invalidity. Such boundaries are corrupted when the researcher becomes the subject of study. Subsequently the concept of validity is increasingly problematic because of the researcher's involvement with the subject of study.

Positivists may contend that, because of this involvement, the researcher cannot be `objective' meaning the research findings are distorted meaning the validity of insider research is threatened. (Kvale: 1995). Alternatively, neo-positivists and anti-positivists assert that, total objectivity is unfeasible; however they contend the researchers' biases threaten validity and trustworthiness. This raises questions such as:

- Will the researcher's relationships with research subjects have a undesirable impact on the subject's behaviour?
- Will the researcher's implicit knowledge lead them to misconstrue data or make false suppositions?
- Will the researcher's insider knowledge lead them to make suppositions and overlook possibly important data?
- Will the researcher's politics, fidelities, or hidden agendas lead to falsifications?
- Will the researcher's moral/political/cultural standpoints lead them to misrepresent data?

There are numerous quoted benefits of insider research. Some argue that insiders have a considerable organisational and practice knowledge which the outsider is unaware. (Jones quoted in Tedlock: 2000). It is further asserted that insider researcher have greater access to data, subjects and systems over long periods of time and that they know where to look. It is asserted by Robson (2002 and Tierney; 1994) that practitioner participants may feel happier and are more open when they are familiar with the researcher. From an anti-positivist viewpoint insider research has the capacity to augment validity due to the supplementary fruitfulness, integrity, reliability and authenticity of the data obtained. Supporters of inside research argue that contentions against insider research are applicable to all research. For example, one can never guarantee the integrity and fidelity and openness of subjects, and our research is always influenced by our subjectivities. Complete objectivity is thus impossible as is evidenced throughout Chapters 6 and 7.

Therefore this research needs to evidence; through this thesis, the application of the contract of participation and the validity procedures. Applying these safeguards will diminish the impact of biases on the research process and will; '*make the*

researcher's position vis-à-vis the research process transparent'. (Hammersley: 2000; 46). By making the research process transparent, it is asserted by Cohen et al: (2000) that readers can conceive their own viewpoints which `*are correspondingly as valid as our own*'. For example my analysis of issues such as gender and power in Chapters 6 and 7 evidence my consciousness and openness to bias.

d. Validity and Validity Procedures

I have referred throughout this Chapter to validity because we were able to develop a research culture that understood the importance of validity. I define validity, in the context of this research, in that the method and procedures were well-grounded, legitimate, fit, sound, and had adequate warrant to be legitimate, genuine and justifiable. The validity procedures were rigorously maintained as this supports the analysis of the data.

There were significant methodological challenges in undertaking this research exercise which I refer to in detail in Chapters 6 and 7.

These validity procedures, which were the foundation of the analytical framework, were applied in this Co-operative Inquiry;

- Agreed terms of validity and verification of research findings amongst participants promoting authentic collaboration and research credibility. Fundamentally, co-inquirers were asked to consider and accept, in the context of this research, that reality is viewed from a constructivist perspective i.e. mind dependent in relation to social circumstance and context. In application to the research, the validity procedures facilitated a process whereby co-inquirers had to 'conform to fact' to ensure findings corresponded with objective reality. This was achieved through a process of 'member checking' where co-inquirers verified researcher interpretations and co-created findings through consensus construction. (Guba & Lincoln: 1989).
- The research cycling is well structured, in this case through the application of an Apollonian framework to contain chaos and complexity.
- The research cycling to twelve being correctly balanced between reflection and action cycles. It was agreed by the group this was a sound ratio between reflection and action as co-inquirers were experienced at reflective models of working. Co-inquirers reviewed and experimented with different aspects of practice from alternative multiple perspectives. This developed diverse data and alternative methods to practice. (Heron & Reason; 2009).
- Several cycles of experiential action and reflection were increasingly refined through negative and positive feedback loops, (i.e. the use of falsifiability). Feedback supported credibility whilst encouraged triangulation giving credence to internal validity. External validity is augmented through the demonstration of transferability of method. (Heron & Reason; 2009).
- This co-operative inquiry developed an intermediate model which balanced divergent and convergent methods of investigation. This progressively

refined the inquiry findings whilst evaluating the type and quality of participation taking place. (Baldwin: 2009)

- The group developed, to a degree, the ability to contain and manage the distress of co-inquirers' unwanted projections. The group was given the opportunity to be open and adventurous but be able to balance this to manage '*messiness*' by keeping order and structure. (Kemmis: 2009).
- The group challenged consensus collusion by adopting a procedure that any co-inquirer at any time could adopt the role of devil's advocate to advance validity, encourage falsifiability and thoroughly challenge when consensus collusion is identified. (Heron & Reason: 2009).
- Co-inquirers internalise and fully committed to the aims of the research promoting a sense of egalitarianism thereby encouraging authentic collaboration. An authenticity criterion was developed for this co-operative inquiry and included:

    1. Co-inquirers evidence their mastery of the method
    2. Co-inquirers equally participate to ensure a balance in contribution rates
    3. Co-inquirers confidently make decisions, facilitate reflective meetings, encourage contribution from others and apply validity procedures again evidencing authentic collaboration. (Marshall: 2009).

- The reflection phase crucially employs a two-way positive and negative feedback loop which was ever present. *'These are two different and complementary ways of articulating reality'*. Negative outcomes 'pruned' the research aims and objectives, encouraged falsifiability and promoted validity as did positive outcomes which cultivate growth. (Heron 1996, p 132).
- The inquiry is at its most effective when individual autonomy [divergent individual effect] and group interaction [convergent reciprocal effect] continually and reciprocally reinforce one another throughout the action and reflection phases. (Heron: 1996).
- A formal review of the validity procedures, participation contract and current research process was built into the research cycles.
- There is a basic measure to test whether the validity procedures and therefore the inquiry has achieved its aims. (One has to ask whether the outcomes of the co-operative inquiry allow co-inquirers and others in the organisation to resolutely and coherently apply, in an integrated way, new practical knowledge. If the answer is yes then a transformative inquiry has taken place and '*reality*' has been successfully articulated. (Winter & Munn-Giddings; 2001).
- The research was written up in a series of draft chapters which were circulated to co-inquirers who provided further feedback. The chapters were then re-drafted, edited and re-distributed. In writing this thesis I have adhered to Heron's (1998) strictly Apollonian guidance on how to structure a co-operative inquiry report.

An example of the validity procedures in operation is as follows:

One co-inquirer wrote in her reflective journal:

CI 6: '*I spend a few minutes every day worrying that something bad will happen on one of my allocated cases. I know this is a common thought we all have so it doesn't make sense to me that when I look at my current case load I have not asked about the father or men coming into the home in all the cases where there is no obvious father. Why have I left myself open like that?*'

The co-inquirer then brought this reflection to a reflective meeting where following discussion another co-inquire concurred and shared the confusion;

'*Why in a profession where we are so concerned about accountability would we leave ourselves so open to criticism?*'

The group agreed to reflect and attempt to identify over the course of the inquiry the reason behind this practice.

This example evidences authentic collaboration and collective verification through member checking. It further evidences convergence, feedback, research cycling and the ability of the inquiry to contain participants' anxieties.

Staying with this topic we discussed our confusion at the following co-inquiry meeting where another co-inquirer said;

CI3 '*We are blind to fathers but why*?'

The group identified that our profession appeared 'blind' to the risks associated to not engaging fathers. We continued to identify and explain this blindness and concluded at a later inquiry meeting with the statement;

'*A silence operating at all levels of the profession and wider as to father engagement*'.

Further evidencing the application of the validity procedures especially; research cycling, openness and attunement. Heron, J & Reason P (2009: 149 - 150).

The results from the January to February 2012 Ofsted Inspection further validated the research.

Conclusion

This Chapter has described a classic evaluative method. The pre case audit set the scene, the co-operative inquiry experimented with different techniques to change

practice and the post case file audit, (coupled with other data gathering activities which emerged from and during the life of the co-operative inquiry), acted to evaluate whether the co-operative inquiry made any difference to practice.

This Chapter has described the research process, the application of the method and how we made sense of that data by providing an example of one cycle of research. This Chapter has explained the action research in a practical application and with particular attention on the co-operative inquiry and its application to the overall research design. This Chapter has particularly focused on evidencing methodological rigour, validity and explaining the data analysis processes.

The design and application of this methodology to the Breaking Down Barriers inquiry led the research to be a full form, same role, internal, open boundary, transformative co-operative inquiry. This meant participants were equally co-researchers and co-subjects collecting data and feedback from outside of the group but within their organisation encouraging the emergence of transformative practice. We agreed on data recording, collating, categorisation, the use of radical memory, the adoption of presentational and propositional meaning, that co-inquirers would use recreation and reflection as methods to present their experiences and that we would employ a considered, balanced dialectical interchange involving propositional and presentational forms within the reflection stages. (Again, see Chapters 6 and 7). (Reason & Hawkins: 1998).

It is important to state that despite such detailed and technical description and application whether the research worked largely depended on who and how the research was applied and the specific contexts of implementation. It is important to further note there was a great deal of complexity generated from both the data and complexity in how to present the findings; choices had to be made. What is salient about this Chapter is that the methodology evidences there is a constant process of theory building, modification and improvement. Application of the method is explained in the next four chapters:

The Implementation of the Methodology →→→→→→

Chapter 4 provides a summarised chronology of the implementation of the research
Chapter 5 describes the establishment and the first series of co-inquiry
Chapter 6 summarises the implementation of the reflection – action – immersion – reflection cycles over fourteen months
Chapter 7 explains how we got to the research findings

Chapter 2: A Summary Chronology of the Research Implementation

Chapter 4; A Summary Chronology of the Breaking Down Barriers Co-operative Inquiry

INTRODUCTION

This chronology provides a summary of the research phases including time periods with sufficient detail to assist the reader understand the key activities that occurred during each phase and how these demonstrate the implementation of the intended methodology and process. The complete chronology can be located in Appendix 2 and evidences what Pawson (2006: 123) articulately describes as; '*an implementation chain*'.

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
June 2009 Phase One (See Ch 5)	MSc research activity 'How are men thought about in social work practice?' completed	6 local discourses identified that affect how social workers think about fathers:	This original research emerged from within the organisation and led to the establishment of the Breaking Down Barriers project.
1.9.09 – 12.11.09 (See Ch 5)	Local & organisational agreements secured in CSC & preparatory work completed	Permission to proceed with the inquiry & participation from staff from CSC for a minimum of a year.	Key permissions, access and resources in place
1.9.09 – 12.11.09 (See Ch 5)	Academic supervision, lectures, reading, discussion and further reflection	Identification of pre & post Case File audit & Action Research as a possible methodology to implement changes in practices.	The identification of a valid applicable methodology.
14.12.09 (See Ch 5)	First Induction Meeting		
23.11.09 – 13.1.10 (See Ch 5)	70 case files audited	Quantitative measure of current practice	Comparator data sourced (See Ch 8)
14.1.10 (See Ch 5) Phase Two	Second Induction Meeting and Pilot of BdB Co-operative Inquiry		14 people committed as co-inquirers Research aims & objectives agreed & a 'pilot' cycle of action, reflection and action

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
24.2.10 (See Ch 5)	First BdB Co-operative Inquiry	Mapping and profiling exercise with FI.	Further Aims identified
28.4.10 (See Chapter 6)	Second BdB Co-operative Inquiry		Mapping completed
9.6.10 (See Chapter 6)	Third BdB Co-operative Inquiry	Case Study Analysis	Good practice in how to engage & work with men identified (See Ch 10)
8.9.10 (See Chapter 6)	Fourth BdB Co-operative Inquiry	Recognition of the complexity surrounding engaging violent men.	Child Protection Conference Process redesigned
13.10.10 (See Chapter 6)	Fifth BdB Co-operative Inquiry	Changing social workers' attitudes Recognition we need to train a lot of staff.	All social workers trained by DVIP in safety planning and engaging men.
5.1.11 (See Chapter 6)	Sixth BdB Co-operative Inquiry	Case Study Analysis	Good practice in how to engage & work with men identified (See Ch 10)
16.2.11 (See Chapter 6)	Seventh BdB Co-operative Inquiry	A Review of Progress one year on & development of ICS	Evidence of early change in practice identified & Sustainability
17.2.11 (See Chapter 6)	Reflective observation of group	Academic from Loughborough	Validity of the research

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
	processes	University observed the 16.2.11 CI.	methodology
15.3.11 (See Chapter 6)	Presentation to LSCB	Support by LSCB of methodology	A watershed moment as the project was given greater authority and legitimacy.
16.3.11 (See Chapter 6)	Presentation to Professor Eileen Munro / Tim Loughton MP Minister for Children's Services at the DfE	Support from DFE over this methodology to change practice	Evidencing validity and replicability Evidence the learning is being applied in other systems
28.3.11 (See Chapter 6)	Eight BdB Co-operative Inquiry	Development of ICS to regularly assess patterns of use in services	Sustainability
11.5.11 (See Chapter 6)	Ninth BdB Co-operative Inquiry	Case Study Analysis	Good practice in how to engage & work with men identified (See Ch 10)
22.6.11 (See Chapter 7)	Performance Information	The first performance report from ICS provides a methodology that measures the involvement of men in the social work process (See Ch7)	A method to record data A reporting system to measure inclusion
22.6.11 (See Chapter 6)	Tenth BdB Co-operative Inquiry	The group analysed ICS data about	Sustainability

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
		father inclusion in the child protection system plus reflect and plan for DV.	Arrange of practice areas agreed re DV
23.6.11 (See Chapter 6)	Reflective observation of tenth CI & group processes	Dr Mark Osborn, Project Leader, the Fatherhood Institute observed	Independent validity of the research methodology
25.6.11 (See Chapter 6)	Replication of the BdBs methodology	DOH funded project entitled; 'Engaging Fathers in Child Protection'	Replication of methodology acts to validate the Breaking down Barriers methodology.
14.9.11 (See Chapter 7) Phase Three	Penultimate BdB Co-operative Inquiry	Reflection on aims and goals of the project as set out back in 2009	Collective agreement of CI's influence (See Ch6, 7 & 10)
27.10.11 **THE FINAL CO-INQUIRY** (See Chapter 7)	The Final BdB Co-operative Inquiry	Solely a reflective session where we all thought about and discussed our learning on the experience of the project.	Evidence of emergence, interconnectivity, system transformation, application and outcomes. (See Ch7 & 10)
1.12.11 – 30.1.12 (See Chapter 8)	Post Case File Audit of 70 cases	Quantitative measure of current practice	Evidence of practice change (See Ch 8)

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
23.1.12 (See Chapter 7)	OFSTED Inspection of Safeguarding & Looked After Children Services	Inspection Begins	Independent audit of method and research outcomes
1.2.12 – 31.3.12 (See Chapter 7)	2 additional reflective meetings organised	Data from Case file audits, findings from external analysis triangulated with original findings by 6 co-inquirers	Findings confirm fathers there has been an increase in the numbers of fathers included
3.2.12 (See Chapter 7)	OFSTED Inspection of Safeguarding & Looked After Children Services	69 cases analysed, children, families and professionals interviewed, performance data analysed (See methodology)	OFSTED identify an increase fathers Engagement, assessment & number of children placed with fathers
18.5.12 (See Chapter 7)	Ofsted Chief Inspector	Ofsted request that we train inspectors and to include the learning on Ofsted's Best Practice Website	Ofsted's request validates the research process and evidences that the learning is being transferred nationally and to those who inspect CSC. This requests acts as independent evidence and evaluation of the inquiry's aims.

Chapter 5: The Research Begins

Chapter 5

1. Introduction

This Chapter describes the initiation, launch and the early stages of implementation of the research methodology.

I have taken Bradbury and Reason (2009) and Heron's (1996) advice about what they would find of great interest in a co-operative inquiry report and so I have adhered to their structure in writing the next three chapters. I offer the reader a brief account of the recruitment of co-inquirers, group members' responses to the induction process, details of the contract of participation and demographic details about the co-inquirers themselves. I provide an account of how the inquiry topic was processed by potential inquiry members at the first reflection meeting and how it was then formed into a launching vision for the inquiry. I also provide an account of how I applied the co-operative inquiry methodology and how co-inquirers implemented the first two reflection – action – immersion - reflections phases and how this shaped the initial phase of the inquiry.

I then go on to explain the first application of the analytical framework and Heron's Framework of Knowing, described in Chapter 3, during the course of the reflection phase. Themes are described; explained, evaluated and preliminary concepts emerge and are explored. This process led to the identification of further actions requiring application in the following cycle. The descriptions in this first and second application of the research methodology and procedure suggested early discourses which, we hoped would lead to '*a body of ideas*' that would in turn lead us to the transformation of practice and the inclusion of fathers. (Pawson: 2006).

It proved pivotal to the research process to invest time and energy in preparing the organisation and participants. It proved imperative to take time to fashion the inquiry into a bespoke data gathering and analytical methodology that met the specific conditions and context of the research questions. Most notably, the research had to be designed and structured around the wishes of those people participating, the organisational culture as well as the organisation's systems, the formal and informal groupings, senior management and other 'major players' in order to realise the inquiry's full potential. Paraphrasing Heron (1996), it proved preferential to adapt the co-operative inquiry processes to the context and particulars of the individual inquiry.

An important point here for the reader; this Chapter needs to be read with reference to the summary chronology in Chapter 4 and the complete chronology in Appendix 2 as they provide empirical evidence of organisational change once again using Bradbury and Reason (2009) and Heron's (1996) guide on how to evidence transformation. Chapter 4 and Appendix 2 evidence what Pawson (2006: 123) articulately describes as; '*an implementation chain*'.

The Structure of this Chapter is:

Part 1: describes the groundwork undertaken to initiate the methodology.

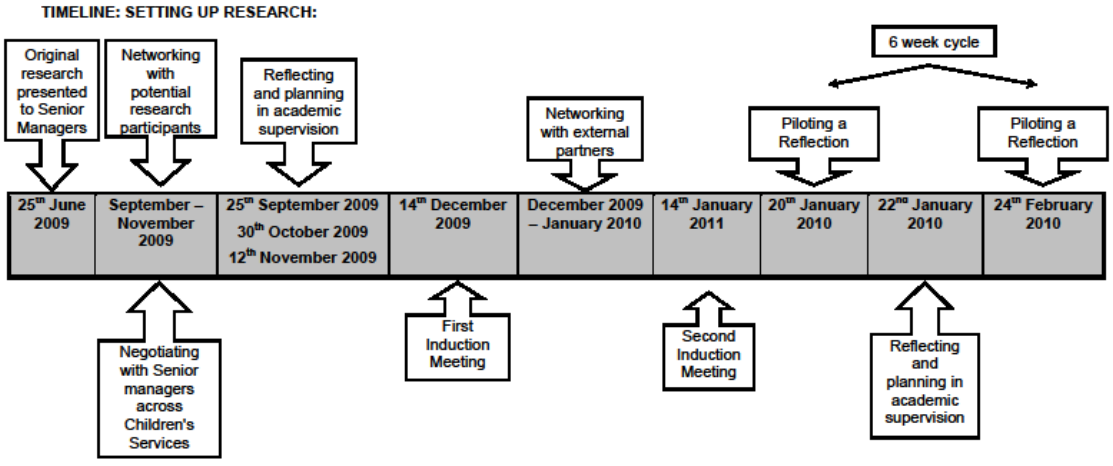
Part 2: explains the piloting of the first reflection-action-immersion- reflection cycle of the research inquiry.

Part 3: reflects over features of the induction and then describes the emergence of preliminary concepts and early learning.

Part 1: 'Preparing the Ground'

The preparation needed prior to the induction meetings proved essential. The preparation was defined by two interconnected strategies. Diagram 5.1 illustrates the time and process to establish the project within Children's Social Care.

Diagram 5.1 Timeline to Initiate the Research Process



Strategy 1: to Garner and Sustain Organisational and Senior Management Support

Powerful organisational 'players' needed to be persuaded to the prospective benefits of the inquiry whilst conversely convinced it did not present a threat to what Obholzer's (2002) describes as the primary task. It was crucial to gain the support of the senior management team within Children's Social Care and the wider 'integrated' Assistant Directors of Children's Services otherwise the research would quickly flounder. Leonard, (2005) citing numerous other academics on change in organisation, argues that transformational change cannot be achieved without the support of good corporate leadership.

Positively, '*the roots*' of support came again from the original research (2009). My line manager, (and Head of Service), agreed to continue to support further activity on the understanding that the organisation of the work was completed outside of office

hours. (This situation changed eighteen months into the inquiry where the project became mainstreamed into the Children-in-Need and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board Service Plans for 2011/12).

I presented a summary of the original research to the senior management teams of Children's Services on the 25th June 2009. I focused the presentation on the gap in practice and the potential benefits to the organisation and practitioners (see next section). A passionate discussion followed with both management teams unanimously agreeing that further work should be undertaken quoting one manager: '*to address this obvious flaw in the management of risk*'. The temporary 'care taking' Assistant Director of Children's Social Care agreed for the project to be developed.

A new Director of Child Protection was appointed in September 2009. It was crucial to also gain her support. Using the same presentation I discussed the research with her in a one to one meeting. After some detailed questioning she agreed to support the research as the methodology was; '*congruent with the values of the organisation particularly the importance of reflection and organisational learning in the development of practice'*.

During this time, I portrayed myself, as Meyerson and Scully (1995) describe, as a '*tempered radical*'. Coghlan and Brannick (in Mead: 2002: 25) point out; '*doing research in and on your own organisation is particularly political, indeed it might [even] be considered subversive*'. I was able to use my position within the organisation to negotiate and secure tangible organisational support including:

1. Authority to proceed with the inquiry within the Children-in-Need Service.
2. Authority for staff across Children's Social Care to participate in a project to include fathers for a minimum of one year.
3. Publicity across digital and print journals within the council.
4. Access to other forums such as Corporate Equalities forum, the Local Safeguarding Children's Board, and senior management teams of Universal Health Services, Police, Early Years Services and Education.
5. Access to data, information and IT systems.
6. Resources including £5000 to support the research activity and a research assistant for one day a fortnight.

This investment of time and energy in gaining organisational support proved unique and pivotal. For example; there was never a need to re-negotiate what Charles and Glennie (2002: 86) describe as; '*externally imposed expectations*'. I was offered encouragement, advice and guidance by peers within the management team. This allowed additional reflection when meeting barriers to the research particularly during the setting up phase but also an on-going 'space' to discuss the development of the research. Conversely and anecdotally, this level of organisational support can add unnecessary pressures particularly in relation to expectations about meaningful results.

In the autumn of 2009, I turned to my well established professional relationships and networks, in the organisation and the surrounding multi-agency landscape, to identify potential allies and supporters. I define allies in this context as people I, or others,

could turn to for access, advice and resources especially to access forums or more notably to advance systems, policies and procedural changes. Allies identified included; colleagues in the performance team, business support (administration), Universal Health, Education, Early Years Services as well as those crucial connections with people in positions that facilitate transition and change but; '*remain behind the scenes of everyday business*'.

To give the project greater legitimacy and authority, attract further resources and incorporate further knowledge and perspectives I approached two external organisations at the boundaries of the inquiry. I achieved this by sending my original research to; Adrienne Burgess, Joint Chief Executive and Head of Research of the Fatherhood Institute. (The Fatherhood Institute is an organisation designed to support individuals and organisations to develop procedures, strategies and practices to include fathers in services and plans). The Fatherhood Institute offered guidance and reflection and access to other external networking opportunities.

Simultaneously, I sent the original research to; Cathy Ashley the Chief Executive of the Family Rights Group, (and editor of the three volumes of Fathers Matters). The Family Rights Group, (FRG), are an organisation committed to researching and advancing the inclusion of fathers in social work practice. FRG have provided support, invited me to sit on a number of strategic forums, and allowed me to present this research at national conferences. I met with both. They agreed to support a project because; '*this was the first time a Children's Social Care Service had ever attempted to rectify this gap in practice*'.

By completing the original research and through early reflections recorded in my reflective journal, I was aware that domestic violence would be an influential topic that would need to be continually discussed. In order to ensure we had the relevant expertise I contacted Ben Jamal Chief Executive of the Domestic Violence Intervention Project (DVIP) and informed him of the research and invited him to join. DVIP are the largest and most sophisticated providers of perpetrator programmes in the UK. I reflected on why I need to gather support from such legitimate and well recognised leaders. I now recognise I needed the legitimacy of others to confront the resistance in the organisation. (I have Ms Burgess, Ms Ashley and Mr Jamal's permission to name them in this document).

Throughout the autumn term, I explored in academic supervisions, lectures and group work activities with peers, a variety of potential research methodologies. In November 2009 I settled on Action Research particularly co-operative inquiry. Also in November I started the pre-case file audit.

Strategy 2: Preparing the Ground: Initiating the Inquiry and Recruiting Participants

Once organisational support was secured, resources and a methodology identified I put out what Heron (1996: 40) terms '*an initiator's call*' for '*potential participants to join a broad inquiry about including fathers in social work practice*'. The initial call was broad as it was important that, from the very beginning, potential participants had a clear message that they would define the focus of inquiry. I employed several strategies to recruit participants:

1. Positive remnants of the original research inquiry remained with some of those social workers who participated in the original research reporting that they would be interested in continuing their involvement should the research evolve. (I felt that the original research inquiry had started an organisational debate about the exclusion of fathers and that our work remained unfinished). (Barrett: 2009).
2. Through September, October and November 2009 I 'networked' to identify those potential participants who, I knew, could greatly contribute to a process of facilitated emergence in the organisation. As we had identified that psychological and organisational defences significantly contributed to the exclusion of fathers this left me keen to attract social workers and managers who thought pyschodynamically. I also wanted the inquiry to have a balance of inquirers in terms of; representatives from each social work team, experience of statutory social work, position and function within the organisation, ethnicity and gender. As I had learnt from the original 2009 research, I felt it essential, (to the research validity, legitimacy and outcomes), that we achieved an equilibrium within the composition of the group. (In the original research I had two male supervisors and I felt this led to an imbalance of perspectives). I hoped that our diversity would lead to conversations about difference. The group needed openness and genuine clarity and a steadiness to ensure we always identified and discussed alternative perspectives and were challenging over issues of difference and diversity and all forms of oppression. (Although, there was never any expectation that female or co-inquirers from ethnic minorities were expected to support the inquiry group learn about feminist or racist practices). (Domenelli: 1998).
3. I sent a blanket invitation to every social worker and manager employed within the Children-in-Need Service launching the inquiry inviting them to an induction meeting. I attached a summary of the original research, a link to the research thesis and a first draft copy of the contract of participation. I also emailed those who had already expressed an interest in attending with a few reflections on possibly topics. I also sent a reminder to every social worker within the service the day before the first induction meeting.

Preparing the Ground: Inducting Potential Research Participants (14th December 2009 – 14th January 2010).

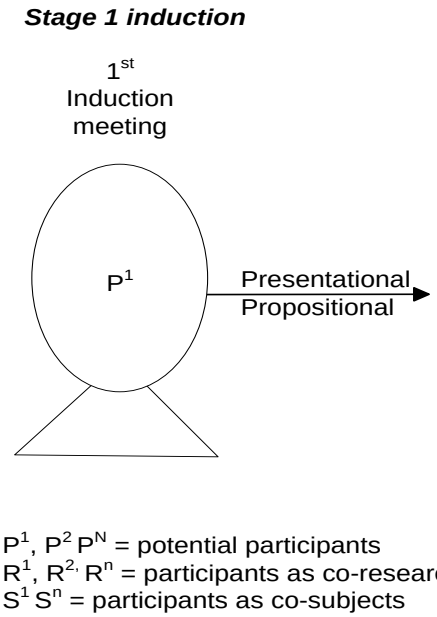
From the very beginning of the inquiry three principles were at the forefront of the research:

1. Initiating and supporting the participants' understanding of the methodology so they felt ownership. The intention; to ensure participants were cognitively and methodologically empowered.
2. The emergence of participative decision-making and genuine collaboration meaning the co-operative inquiry would become collaborative. The outcome being that participants were politically empowered.
3. The formation of an ambience within the group where pain and anxiety aroused by the inquiry can be recognised, openly acknowledged and processed through reflective discussion. The intentions here, to ensure participants were interpersonally and emotionally empowered. (Heron: 1996).

The induction of potential participations had to be well organised because it would provide the platform to articulate and integrate these three principles from the beginning of the research process. The induction was the foundation for the research inquiry and it was crucial that potential participants felt that they understood the method, the decision-making process and felt safe enough to commit to the research. The first induction meeting took place at 2pm on the 14th December 2009 in a large meeting room within the Children-in-Need Service. We met for three hours. The agenda was:

- A presentation of the original research findings and recommendations.
- A presentation of the research method.
- An exercise to identify partners and
- An exercise to identify key priorities for the group and draft a contract of participation and finally seek agreement on participation. (See Appendix 3)

Diagram 5.2: Theoretical illustration of the first co-operative inquiry induction



P^1, P^2 P^N = potential participants
R^1, $R^{2,}$ R^n = participants as co-researchers
S^1 S^n = participants as co-subjects

Sixteen social workers and managers attended the first induction meeting. We used visual aids (presentational) to facilitate discussion and used mini cycles of the method; reflection and action (propositional) by splitting potential participants into pairs and threes. I started by warmly welcoming everyone. I described the rationale behind the general focus of the inquiry and the principles of action research, the collaborative approach but focused mainly on co-operative inquiry. Diagram 5.2 provides an early theoretical map of the process.

The organisational culture dominated this first meeting as many of the potential participants were used to highly organised, hierarchically led project launches. I wanted to demonstrate a different approach so I asked each person to say hello and why they had attended the induction and to share their views on working with fathers. I wanted the group to connect as practitioners and experience the group differently from normal organisational life. (McArdle: 2002). The primary outcome I wanted from

the first induction meeting was to: induct, select, inform and agree the focus of the inquiry. (Heron: 1996: 62). This would allow potential participants to voluntarily contract in or opt out demonstrating what Wadsworth (2009: 23) describes as '*informed self-selection*' whilst additionally demonstrating informed consent.

The induction was designed to mirror the co-operative inquiry method and to attract participation by showing those who attended a very different way of facilitating practice development. The induction was also organised to establish a research community with shared values, a world view, a passion and a language. The induction was designed to attract people who were able to internalise and own the research method. This would provide the basis for future group evolution.

After discussion and clarification of these issues potential participants used the developed criteria to select themselves in or out of the co-operative inquiry. Five people immediately came forward and agreed to participate. The others agreed they would inform me within forty eight hours whether they would participate. An anonymous feedback questionnaire was circulated to those who attended as a further vehicle for feedback.

Time was overlooked with the first induction meeting finishing forty minutes after the agreed completion time. Participants' fed-back that; '*they were excited to be involved in a project that was directly linked to practice development*'.

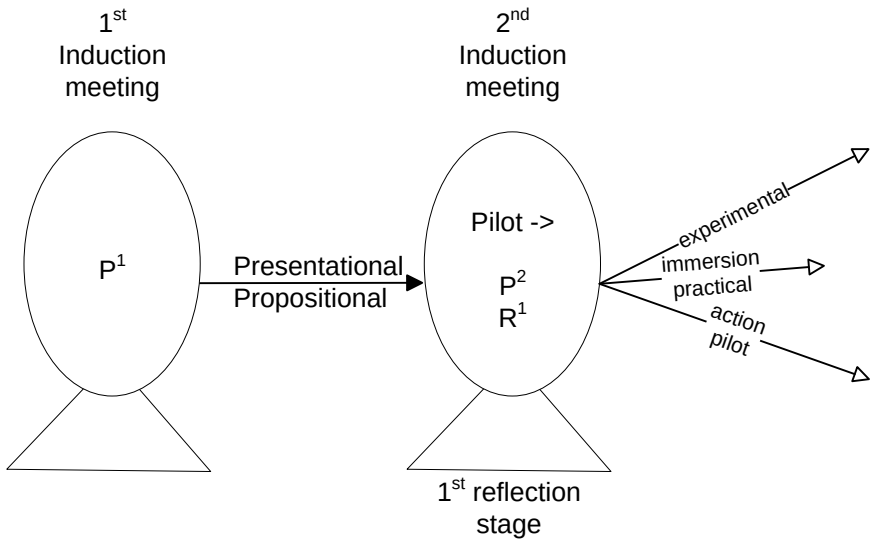
The feedback questionnaire concluded that potential participants had a relatively satisfactory level of understanding about the broad direction of the inquiry and some awareness of the methodology. However, the evaluation clearly indicated that attendees did not fully understand the concepts surrounding the co-operative inquiry and were unable to agree a set of actions or commit to the contract of participation. Despite this a total of seven people committed to participate.

Adhering to the principles of co-operative inquiry I felt it was important to organise a second induction meeting.

The Second Induction Meeting and First Reflection Phase 14th January 2010

The second induction meeting was organised for an entire day in a meeting room in the Town Hall, (a separate building from the Children-in-Need Service). This allowed potential participants to fully immerse themselves in the induction and then move on to identify the first set of actions for the group. Fourteen people attended, (twelve who had attended the first induction meeting including the seven who had already committed to participate).

Stage 2 induction, piloting action and immersion

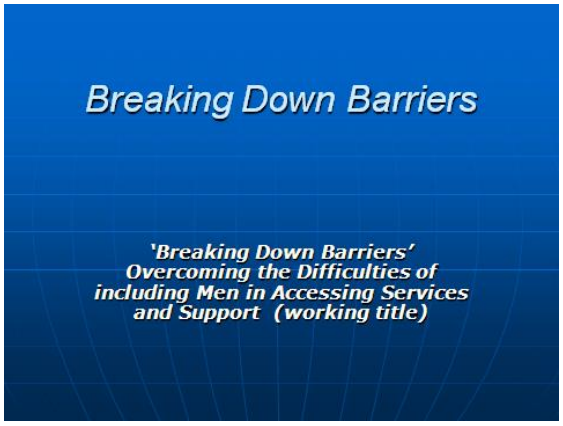


P^1, P^2 P^N = potential participants
R^1, $R^{2,}$ R^n = participants as co-researchers
S^1 S^n = participants as co-subjects

Diagram 5.3: The Second Induction

We followed the same agenda as on the 14.12.09 although we concentrated longer on describing the method and significantly expanded the time for discussion and reflection. The agenda also introduced the four model reflective analytical framework as described in Chapter 3. A number of presentational documents were again made available to potential participants including copies of the method and a summary of previous research. Diagram 5.3 provides an early, yet further developed, theoretical map of the process and it illustrates the two induction meetings and the piloting of the first reflection – action - immersion cycle demonstrating how the co-inquirers left the second induction with agreed actions.

I started by representing a PowerPoint presentation on the barriers to male inclusion, (description). See below:



Agenda

- Introductions
- A reminder of the barriers
- The Task
- Aims of the Group
- A Participatory method of working
- TOR / Contract
- Current progress
- AOB

International Literature Review & Critique

- Historic perspectives of the social construction of male identity
- A shifting social policy towards men
- Ethnicity, class and the construction of masculinity
- Men, masculinity and child development
- Social work in a modern age

Literature Review continued

- Social work and the idealisation of motherhood and the denigration of fatherhood
- The constructions and pathologies of masculinity in social work
- Social work practice and the invisibility of men
- The construction of violence about men in social work
- Educating and training social workers about men and masculinity

'The Personal'

How family origin and life experience influence, through assumption and prejudice, how men are thought about in social worker practice.

'It is the prejudice that stops us seeing the dad not the timescales'

Fear

An endemic feeling within social work is the very real presence of fear, fear of a violent sexual attack or fear of allegation.

'I would always think that at the end of the day a woman could hit you but a man could rape you or sexually abuse you in some way'

Sexuality

The ever present discourse of human sexuality was present and yet is ignored within the profession

Role Modelling

The important function of modelling behaviours to demonstrate survival, escape from structural discrimination and male responsibility, 'a good mother' and professionalism.

'I've got two men in my team and I don't think that about them'

Organisational responsibility

- The need for Children's Social Care to support and challenge the practice of social workers' in advancing the inclusion of men
- ***'Its not discussed in supervision, our managers don't challenges us'.***

Male Responsibility

A demand for men to take responsibility for the care and protection of their children. Although, this is not a new discourse, it is one that is rarely spoken of in social work

Authority of the Group

- We have been charged with the following responsibility;

'Increase engagement and partnership working with fathers of children in need and children subject to child protection.'

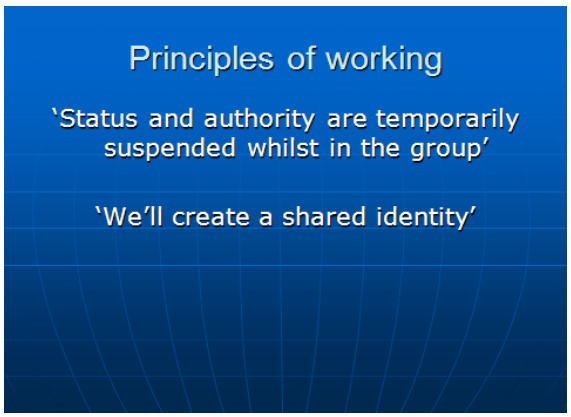
(Children's Services Partnership Service Plan 2010/2011)

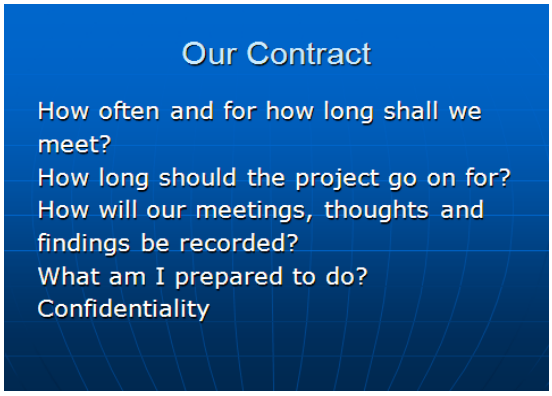
Aims of the Group

- To attempt to institutionalise practices, procedures and systems which aid inclusion.
- To increase the numbers of men (fathers, step-fathers, and partners) including telephone numbers, addresses and dates of birth recorded on all referrals.
- To increase the numbers of men (fathers, step-fathers, and partners) included on Initial assessments.
- To increase the numbers of men (fathers, step-fathers, and partners) comprehensively assessed as part of a core assessment
- To increase the numbers of men (fathers, step-fathers, partners) invited to and attending Initial and Review Child Protection Conferences
- To increase the numbers of men (fathers, step-fathers, partners) invited to and attending Family Group Conferences
- To increase the numbers of men (fathers, step-fathers, and partners) invited to LAC reviews.
- To increase the numbers of men involved (fathers, step-fathers, partners) when initiating court proceedings.

A Participatory & Collaborative way of working

'It is for people themselves in their own right, to enter into agreements with each other to discover and create knowledge and this is the only principle on which research and inquiry has a right to exist'.
(Paraphrase of Thomas Paine; 1791)





We then debated the findings and discussed our current practice and our colleagues' attitudes to men, (evaluation). We split into groups to discuss our own personal prejudices and how our own practice prevents the inclusions of fathers, (explanation). Understandably some of the participants were more comfortable than others in identifying their prejudices, assumptions and fears. Despite this there was a transparent discussion and quite a few acknowledgements about how individual participants have included fathers. For example:

C4; *'There has been many times I simply did not even think about the father if he was not living in the home'.*

C 6: So many of the men we are confronted with are just horrible that honestly that is what I expect and over time my motivation to work with them has dwindled'.

C9: 'I am often too afraid to telephone or see some of these men many are erratic and have histories of violence'.

We completed an exercise to negotiate what we meant by collaborative methods of working (founded on tenets of equality, respect and partnership), among people who normally work together within conscious and unconscious hierarchical power relationships. We undertook an exercise where we broke into groups and took twenty recommendations per group from the original research and prioritised them, (explanation). We used categories of prioritisation which were; must achieve, would like to achieve and would ideally like to achieve, (evaluation). We prioritised and

brainstormed and as one co-inquirer put it, we thought '*out of the box*', as it was important to think innovatively and; '*past the limitations of current practice towards true creativity*'. (Reason: 1988: 33).

There were discussions in the group over processes to protect male staff from allegations. There was a reflection over whether these processes should also be in place for female workers. The child protection conference system was discussed at length as it was recognised there was a need to include more men safely in conferences. There was a real desire across the group to be pragmatic and this led us to agree on a number of pragmatic targets which co-inquirers wished to investigate and were prioritised in the 'must achieve' category. The inquiry was organised around these targets.

We had a discussion about the core values of the inquiry. We considered our values, assumptions, attitudes, ethos and purpose. We wanted to develop and maintain a climate and a group environment that was conducive to meet our agreed aims. We paid particular attention to the following:

We discussed inequality and the need for open access as well as taking pleasure in the inquiry. We also discussed:

- The need to take a positive approach.
- That our intention was to treat co-inquirers, peers and colleagues as resources and to be confident that our service and our peers and colleagues had potential to achieve the inquiry's aims.
- Co-inquirers were encouraged to perceive themselves as sources of inspiration to colleagues and peers and to other co-inquirers. (Douglas: 2000).
- A commitment to professional development, learning, creativity and education.

From these shared belief systems came the group processes and from our differences came change and progress. (Douglas: 2000). We then named some of our intended activities to put these values into practice:

- Researching persistently and relentlessly
- Negotiating and liaising with teams and colleagues and raising the profile of the inquiry and promote further local ownership
- Promote learning about father inclusion throughout the organisation

These core disciplines encouraged a personal mastery (by each co-inquirer) which, as Peter Senge identified, are essential for individual and organisational learning. (Smith: 2001).

After a short break, I presented the theory of co-operative inquiry. (I tried to be as creative and explorative in my language). See below.

Co-operative Inquiry

'Breaking Down Barriers'
Developing an Approach to Include Men in Social Work Services

'Co-operative inquiry involves two or more people researching a topic through their own experience of it, using a series of cycles in which they move between the experience and reflecting together on it'.
(Heron; 1996 page 1).

Definition

Co-operative inquiry shifts the balance of power, establishes participative, democratic relationships providing the foundation where emotional states can be identified and tensions and projections caused by the inquiry liberally expressed and discussed.

'Co-operative inquiry, allows participants to move cyclically between the roles of co-researchers and co-subjects totally engaging themselves in reflection, as researchers, and action, as co-subjects.'
(Reason & Heron; 2009. Reason & Bradbury; 2009).

The essential characteristics of Co-operative Inquiry are:

- The inquiry is self-directed, participative (epistemologically and politically) and democratic with inquirers defining the area of study, designing the method, conducting the research and interpreting the data.
- The method challenges the oppression of the old paradigm of value based unilateral research imposed on passive research subjects.
- All co-subjects are fully involved in the research design, content and method and act as co-researchers.

The essential characteristics of Co-operative Inquiry are (continued 1):

- The research methodology within the co-operative inquiry is an emergent process.
- There is a planned interaction and relationship between reflection and understanding balanced with action, practice and experience.
- Validity is prioritised throughout the data gathering and analysis stages through the application of agreed procedures and use of a wide ranging set of skills.

The essential characteristics of Co-operative Inquiry are (continued 2):

- A far-reaching radical epistemological position is adopted for an extensive study which is edifying and leads to change.
- Co-operative inquiry creates and supports a self-generating culture of inquiry within the organisation developing confidence of practitioners / co-participants to take risks in the development of new working practices.
- The co-inquirers are willing to explore their emotional responses which act as data gathering instruments.

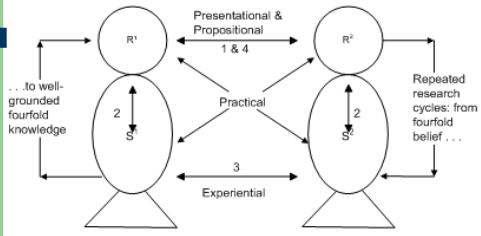
Practical stages of the Co-operative Inquiry

- Stage 1: Reflection focuses the inquiry topic. An initial action plan is agreed from themes identified in previous research and through personal interest and experience for the first action stage. (Today)
- Stage 2: Action. In this first action phase the co-inquirers have their first experience of implementing actions. Their actions and the outcome are recorded and this data is gathered for analysis.

Practical stages of the Co-operative Inquiry 1

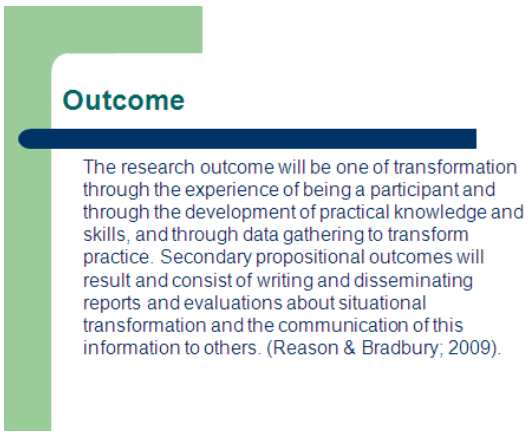
- Stage 3: encourages co-inquirers to submerge themselves into the experience of stage 2 in order to 'go beyond' the inquiry design to discover new awareness.
- Stage 4: Reflection. The process of linking meaning of participation to realising participation allowing participants to share the data they have generated from the action stage in order to reconsider, critically reflect and adapt the inquiry, to develop a plan of action for the next action phase to investigate either the same or more diverse features of the inquiry.

Four cognitive modes and stages of the inquiry cycle:



$R^1, R^2 \ldots R^n$ = participants as co-researchers

$S^1, S^2 \ldots S^n$ = participants as co-subjects



We again broke into groups for forty five minutes where the participants discussed the method in-depth. We then moved on to agree some basic ground rules:

1. Confidentiality about our conversations and in terms of the recordings.
2. Sticking to task.
3. Sharing speaking time.
4. Adherence and flexibility in terms of attendance and time keeping.

We sat together and ate lunch after which we broke into groups to identify shared and individual themes and questions about the research. These were then listed and addressed by the group as a whole. We then drafted a contract of participation which can be located in Appendix 3.

We had a lengthy discussion about opportunities, direction of the project, resources in the borough, additional potential allies and potential barriers. These aims were placed in the; 'would like to achieve category' as was influencing practice across the wider multi-agency landscape.

We discussed how fathers were excluded by analysing the literature and comparing it to the practice, the systems and our experiences in our local authority. We reflected on our individual practice trying to identify how we individually and collectively contributed to the exclusion of fathers.

We agreed to use the early months of the inquiry to instigate conversations in our teams and with colleagues and peers and to collect evidence. We hoped that, as the inquiry evolved, our focus would be on specifics of good practice with a continued drive to address weaknesses. We agreed that the issue of domestic violence needed to be at the heart of our planning.

We also considered whether we needed any other person to join the group to support our aims. One name was mentioned, the CEO of Respect as it was suggested he could advise on national issues, advise the group on best practice, strategic developments as well as being psychoanalytically trained, a social worker and intimately involved in the development of perpetrator programmes. We also agreed that we would invite others to join once we, as a group, were established and we felt the co-operative inquiry was secure, in terms of aims, objectives and plans.

Nine people came forward during the lunch hour and confirmed their participation. A further three confirmed by the end of the day. We had our 'closed' group. (The purpose of a closed group and constant membership is that there is a more intense interaction amongst group members who know one another and who reflect together regularly as we did not have the distraction of needing to initiate new members or transmit the group's culture). From early afternoon co-inquirers requested that there was an opportunity to test out the methodology. We agreed to 'pilot' a co-operative inquiry cycle. Eight convergent actions were identified and agreed by co-inquirers to be implemented over the next six weeks. The actions were:

- The co-inquirers agreed we need to launch the inquiry with a major initiative. Discussions were had in the group about mapping and profiling the current services across Children Services. Coincidently the deputy head of Early Years Services, (an ally of the research), had written to me offering a small budget for this activity and so I introduced the possibility of asking a colleague from the Fatherhood Institute to support the co-operative inquirers undertake a piece of research within the borough. The co-inquirers agreed that they would share out the tasks of organising the mapping and profiling and agreed a methodology of; a systemic audit of procedures and focus groups. Two assistant researchers from the Fatherhood Institute would work with co-inquirers to meet with fathers, mothers, and other family members and a sample of social workers and Early Years staff to assess the extent of the inclusivity of services, to collate good models of practice and identify systemic barriers to attaining every feature of inclusion. One of the co-inquirers agreed to contact the Fatherhood Institute.
- All co-inquirers agreed to attend the focus groups for social workers and managers.
- All co-inquirers agreed to identify parents who had received a service from the Children-in-Need Service in the past twelve months, for the researchers to interview.
- 2 co-inquirers also volunteered to assist the researchers evaluate the 'inclusiveness' of the electronic databases and paperwork employed by the department.
- The group agreed timescales and supports to the two external researchers. The group were keen to reflect with the researchers their findings which were the agreed subject for discussion at the next two reflective meetings. The group were also keen to contribute to the final written report.
- Each co-inquirer agreed to reflect, over the next 6 weeks, on their own practice when assessing children and families over father inclusion and their own feelings towards men.
- Each co-inquirer agreed to 'test out' the draft contract of participation.

We agreed that these first set of actions were convergent, that each inquirer would undertake a collective set of actions, (application).

Part 2: Piloting the First Reflection – Action - Reflection Cycle (14th January to 24th February 2010)

1. Introduction

Part 2 describes the implementation of the reflection-action-immersion-reflection cycle and the second reflective meeting.

2. The First Reflections and Actions

On reflection, we spent most of the second induction day thinking about the different overt and covert resistances that were operating in the Children-in-Need Service. We knew that we would spend most of our time over the next year in the group thinking how we were going to address the resistances in a way that empowered staff to take ownership of the research aims.

BY piloting the reflective and action planning process of co-operative inquiry we had inadvertently tested the contract of participation and we reviewed it with that experience in mind. It felt we had created the foundations for a community of learning, of inquiry and of practice. The contract of participation delineated our roles and emphasised a mutual set of standards, norms, terminology and agreed procedures. The contract was redrafted and circulated to co-inquirers and can be located in Appendix 3. I included a draft description of the group which was unanimously approved by email: (Friedman: 2009).

Paraphrasing McArdle, (2002) '*We are a co-operative inquiry of twelve with numerous others* [allies] *on the peripheries. We know who we are; we have established and started to develop a group identity, a group consciousness and a collective understanding. Importantly, we have an agreed name; 'Breaking down Barriers'. We are six men and six women, we have an age range of 32 to 53, we are all qualified social workers, we are four managers and eight social workers, and we are all educated to a minimum of a Masters level. We are made up of three Black British women, two Black African women, two Black British men, one Turkish British male, one Canadian white woman and three white British males and we are based within the Children-in-Need Service and the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, of Children's Social Care, and two external partners; Domestic Violence Intervention Project and Respect. (The CEO of Respect had confirmed his attendance by email). We have agreed an ethical framework and a set of validity procedures, (both subject to review). We are using co-operative inquiry to explore what systems and practices exclude fathers in social work and we are identifying methods which encourage the inclusion of fathers within social work practice*'. Foulkes (in Seager & Thummel: 2009) argues that groups are most effective in terms of analysis when they reflect great diversity of psychopathologies, gender, age, and cultural backgrounds which is what we attempted here.

3. Reflections on the Induction Process

I was keen to mirror the principles of co-operative inquiry and adopt Humberto Maturana's (in Senge & Scharmer: 2009:195), dictum '*all knowing is doing, all doing is*

knowing'. As research initiator and induction facilitator, (and guided by Reason et al: 2002 and Heron 1996), I had a number of objectives throughout the induction:

1. To facilitate these meetings so potential participants would understand concepts and method.
2. To encourage mutual collaboration from every member of the co-inquiry.
3. To build relationships with one another.
4. To encourage participants to internalise aspects of the method.
5. To encourage participants to be aware of the emotional and interpersonal nature of the inquiry, in particular, to ensure co-inquirers felt safe and included.
6. That the foundations for authentic collaboration were laid.
7. I was careful not to '*come on too strong*' with my own views about the research as this may have engendered over-reliance, defiance or disaffection.
8. To build an environment of safety within the reflection meetings so co-inquirers could concentrate on what concerned them rather than having to make a good impression.

(Heron & Reason: 2009).

Finally, one co-inquirer suggested that the group regularly use case studies as a method to analyse practice. The group agreed that this would be a key tool to explore transformative practice by studying cases where fathers were included in social work intervention. This would allow the group to explore complex practices conveyed anecdotally. Case study analysis was a convergent theme running throughout the co-operative inquiry and allowed the inquiry to test, revise and refine preliminary theories. We agreed, over the life of the inquiry to develop and write a good practice guide of how to include fathers in social work assessments and interventions which can be located in Chapter 7.

The two induction meetings allowed potential participants to intellectually and emotionally process the inquiry. The group was established in such a way as to foster openness internally and externally and this allowed the group to develop legitimacy in the eyes of colleagues and peers. This legitimacy allowed us to move the organisation in the right direction. (Smith: 2001). This was achieved by reviewing all the research recommendations available and collectively choosing from these the most salient for our context.

The group's design was a conscious attempt and essentially concerned with the group's objective. The two induction meetings were designed so that an early solid foundation of trust would develop. The group actively decided on its direction and its processes and this encouraged commitment and gave the project energy. I encouraged colleagues to join the group because I knew individually and collectively those I encouraged to join would bring resources, experience and be a powerful force in bringing about change. Although, Douglas (2000) points out that the choice of participants also limits and constrains the group.

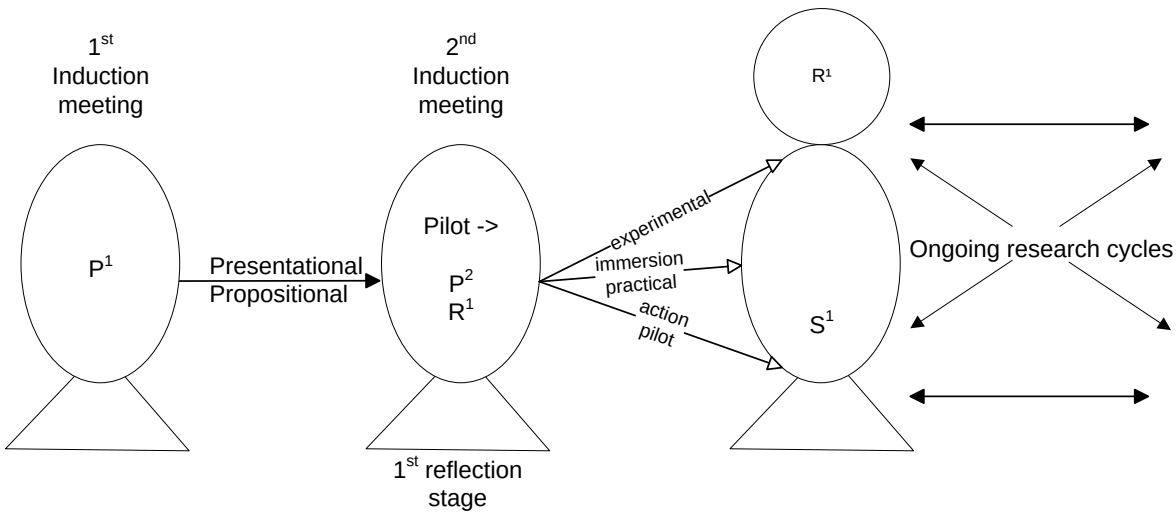
Roles were also considered. For example; one particular participant was keen to take up the role of devil's advocate. A devil's advocacy role proved crucial as it entrenched critical analysis as part of the group's reflective process rather than simply tacitly

accepting data and experience. Developing this critical reflective approach resulted in a culture that challenged both assumption and the development of 'routines' within the group process. (Baldwin: 2002). Using Heron's (1996) analytical framework, I deconstructed the first reflection action process:

i. Description

The co-inquirers spent the first six week action phase investigating, in experience, the barriers to the inclusion of fathers as they tried to implement the agreed convergent actions of coordinating, supporting the mapping and profiling activity which was co-managed between the co-inquirers and the assistant researchers from the Fatherhood Institute. Co-inquirers experienced first-hand the difficulties of identifying fathers in our service to be interviewed. Others, in their attempts to support a systemic audit reported they were struggling to identify information about fathers in the borough. The convergent method was very helpful as each co-inquirer shared very similar experiences and all came to recognise the difficulties in the task they had signed up for. This was the first experience for co-inquirers starting to develop and apply a range of inquiry skills. Co-inquirers were recognising they were becoming research practitioners as they developed new awareness to '*transcend the inquiry format*'. (Heron: 1996: 124). This was the first time the co-inquirers left the group to venture into the 'outer world' to gather data.

Diagram 5.4: The 4 stage process of induction and piloting a reflection – action – immersion and reflection cycle



P^1, P^2 P^N = potential participants
R^1, $R^{2,}$ R^n = participants as co-researchers
S^1 S^n = participants as co-subjects

This first six week action phase was the opening experience the co-inquirers had to totally immerse themselves into their actions, (and into the heart of the inquiry), as they became open to experience and the possibility of transforming practice. The co-inquirers found themselves regularly 'bumping' into one another during the course of their day to day work. They would discuss their experiences and mutually support one

another drive forward the agreed actions from the first reflection meeting. I also acted informally facilitating and supporting colleagues to implement their actions.

The second reflection meeting was held on the 24th February 2010 and was the first experience of co-inquirers coming together to reflect on the data and experience from the first action phase. We piloted the validity procedures, the agenda and the framework of analysis. This was the first time we were to use the self-validating criterion to categorise themes. We included on our agenda the need to review how each co-inquirer experienced the action and reflection phase particularly;

- That the aims of the project were correct
- That the processes felt comfortable
- And those actions that we had prioritised, in the induction meeting, remained priorities or whether we needed to adapt or reframe the inquiry

Each member took it in turn to describe their initial, experientially generated, data and feelings. We then reflected, modified and pooled our findings into agreed categories as recommended by Heron (1996) and then collectively identified themes. These are a few quotes from the co-operative inquirers about their initial experience of the first cycle of reflection – action – reflection:

C2: 'It was very different to anything else I have done'.

C3: 'It meant to me this was going to be different, first off we had to work in between meetings meaning we had something to contribute at the next meeting. This left me more interest than the usual style of meetings we attend.

C7: I like the fact we were given some resources and we have been working with those researchers developing this information about current services. I feel a bit of control'.

C8: 'I've been thinking a lot about my father and my practice the last few weeks'.

ii. Explanation

We used a four point methodology to make sense of the data and reach agreement about categories, themes and next steps. This four point methodology employed radical memory to identify and record potential themes during the action phase, which were then presented to the group for collation and categorisation. This helped make sense of the data as well as focus and structure our efforts on the next series of actions. This allowed us to maintain a balance within the inquiry between emergence and pre-planning. This process also allowed us to review the launching statement and the ethical framework, the inquiry procedures, the recording processes and the duration between reflection, action and reflection phases. The group reported they were happy with the current agreements in relation to these issues. We spent a

considerable amount of time reflecting on how each co-inquirer felt as they 'pioneered' a new practice initiative. For example:

C10: 'I asked colleagues in my team whether they could help me identify fathers that we could talk to. They are looked at me as if I was asking to speak to an alien'.

iii. Application

We then agreed, for our second set of actions we would diverge with each co-inquirer undertaking their own specific actions. Individuals reported they felt more confident in their roles and functions and could be more creative, (maintaining a balance with Dionysian culture). We based this decision on a number of factors which were; there were many individual areas of interest to pursue, it was an individual choice, it supported early learning as well as each co-inquirer's sense of identity within the group.

Agreed Actions and details of the reflection – action - reflection cycle held on the 24.2.10.

- Four co-inquirers had invested quite a bit of time and energy in the mapping and profiling. They agreed to continue this important work. Two of whom agreed to draft the report.
- Those co-inquirers who were managers, in the Children-in-Need Service, would give clear direction to social workers to record fathers and paternal extended family members and to not authorise assessments without evidence that this has either happened or attempts had been made and recorded.
- Co-inquirers based within the Referral and Advice Team, (R&A) (including the team manager), were to imbed within standard operating procedures the need to include men at the first point of contact. This meant developing a system, training staff to ask the referrer; '*where is the father, do you have his details, if not can you please try and find them* etc?'
- As initiator and as a co-inquirer, I agreed to attend the Referral and Advice team's team meeting to discuss the importance of the project and their role as the first point of contact both to the immediate, to longer term practice and to the transformation of practice; (i.e. if referrers knew we would always ask about the father this would influence them to identify fathers earlier in their own practice).
- The social worker based in the Referral and Advice Team, who led on developing and maintaining joint working practices with police, was identified to attempt to access the contact details of all fathers arrested for domestic violence.
- I took on attempting to alter ICS to include an additional question for social workers in initial and core assessments of who the child views as a significant male.
- I also agreed to try to influence the audit framework adopted within the organisation to include male inclusion as well as ensure that a significant male category could be included in the electronic Common Assessment Framework,

(e-CAF). I also agreed to meet with the co-ordinator of the FGC programme to attempt to increase the numbers of men attending FGCs.

- Co-inquirers agreed to facilitate discussions in team meetings as to why there was a lack of fathers recorded on case files and included in social work interventions.
- The co-inquirer who represented child protection co-ordinators agreed to revise (with the inquirer from DVIP) the procedures of including men in child protection conferences.

And so it continued for a year and a half, meeting every six week, reviewing and thinking about our actions either agreeing those actions had been achieved and moving on to the next or trying different strategies to implement actions that proved more challenging which I described in detail in Chapters 6 and 7. The final section of this Chapter reflects on this preliminary stage.

Part 3: Preliminary Reflections on Establishing a Co-operative Inquiry

3.1 Introduction

I reflect over features of the induction and then describe the emergence of preliminary concepts and early learning. I chiefly concentrate on my role as initiator and facilitator, the evolution of the group, power, organisational culture and learning in relation to hierarchical organisations and leadership. I discover early on that these initial subjects demand further exploration and analysis as the research progressed.

I was able to form this group because the timing was right in terms of political and professional interest, policy development and interest following the death of Peter Connelly.

3.2 Initiating and Facilitating the Co-Inquiry; the Complexity of Roles

As the initiator of the project I felt responsible in creating a safe and secure reflective space that would facilitate a heightened awareness of ourselves in action as well as opportunities for participants to professionally grow and learn. We started to create this 'safe space' by implementing the contract of participation and adhering to the best practice model of establishing a group guided by Bradbury and Reason (2009) and the work by Reason et al (2002) which specifically guides students of co-operative inquiry on the best way to establish a co-operative inquiry group.

From the first induction meeting I knew I would need to '*let go of my ownership of the project*', discourage dependency and yet still try and maintain a facilitatory role whilst encouraging all co-inquirers to keep the inquiry focused. I wrote in my reflective diary that: 'achieving this balance would be a considerable challenge'.

The structure of the process reflection – action – reflection ensures momentum is maintained and roles and actions are clear for every co-inquirer. I wanted co-inquirers to feel satisfied with the inquiry, that it was meeting their areas of interests again maintaining momentum and motivation. I attempted to achieve this by sharing my

own personal 'story' (see Chapter 1), my prejudices about working with fathers as I wanted to be an example of how the inquiry should function.

I believed my actions would foster trusting relationships, support others to see me out of role as the senior manager in the group and would further support the creation of a safe environment amongst co-inquirers encouraging others to share personal feelings, both essential for a deeply involved reflective inquiry. (Maquire: 2002).

I felt vulnerable within the organisation and amongst peers advocating for a perceived radical and potentially threatening, (to managers and workers' very survival), change in practice. I felt de-skilled and a lack of confidence during these early reflective meetings thinking I was unable to contain and process anxiety, projection, transference and counter-transference. On one hand I needed the seniority my position to drive forward the project but on the other hand my seniority was having a detrimental impact on the group in terms of power relations. This conflict would remain throughout the life of the inquiry.

We offset some of the inevitable constrains in the group by introducing two external members to the group who brought skills, (in domestic violence work).

In the facilitator role, my function was to recognise process, (for example; identify actions from co-inquirers' conversations), and offer early methodological input. (McArdle: 2002). I was conscious to provide '*energy*' to the co-inquiry and so I role modelled an energetic, motivated approach. This energy, I hoped, would be infectious encouraging individual and group motivation building enthusiasm in others.

I knew that facilitation skills would be crucial in the group to sustain early commitment and to ensure there was a sophisticated level of reflection employing, what Heron (1996) describes as '*critical subjectivity*'. (Baldwin: 2002). I used my facilitation skills in the first two reflective meetings to;

- Adopt a third position,
- Elicit themes from the experience, the data and in conversations.
- Broadened discussion, reflected back to the group salient points
- Review and condense collective concepts and opinions.

As facilitator, I had a multiplicity of roles, roles which I thought I was keen to transfer to other participants although my journal reflections evidenced that during the early stages of the inquiry I was particularly split over the loss of power and control of the project. I wrote that; '*transferring the facilitator role to other co-inquirers concerned me greatly as I believed this would lead to a loss of direction and a breakdown in the group process*'. This meant that I did not entirely address issues of organisational power. I did discuss my seniority in the group with the co-inquirers at the induction meeting and in the first three co-inquiry group meetings. We discussed the complexities of my involvement and how this could be limited. For example I volunteered to leave the room for the last hour of each co-inquiry, I also suggested co-inquirers meet without me.

However co-inquirers repeatedly stated that they were content with how I was approaching the project even though '*I was the boss*' to some in the room.

We agreed a basic process on reporting in the group;

- Ensuring that everyone had equal space to present and reflect over their data
- Turn taking on important issues
- Encouraging the use of storytelling which was added to the contract of participation. I reflected, after the second reflection meeting, that the use of stories, (in this milieu case studies), was an advantageous mechanism for facilitation. (Heron: 1996).

I felt that the early process was facilitator driven and I articulated these feelings to the group hoping this would encourage them to take further responsibility in facilitating discussion and action. Surprisingly, inquirers reported they were happy for me to remain in the facilitator role. (I suspected this would be a feature of the inquiry).

I worried my multiple roles would distort the group interaction and processes making it very difficult to establish a sense of equity and supportive, mutually respectful peer relationships. I tried to minimize my previous involvement by asking other co-inquirers to take up presentational roles, (although this was difficult), in the second induction meeting so as not to dominate. At the early stages of the co-inquiry I wanted my role to change from initiator / facilitator to facilitator / co-inquirer although, in hindsight, this was naïve.

I was hopeful that the shared experience of the application of the principles of co-operative inquiry would diminish the role and authority provided by the hierarchy. I adopted Mead's (2002) method of induction and I asked the group for feedback in the first reflective meeting. I was repeatedly told by the co-inquirers to contribute more especially, they said, in these early stages where they requested that I take on the facilitator role until individuals felt more confident in the process. However, this was balanced with my struggle, like many initiators, to let go and not direct the group. I realised that I needed to discuss this with the group as this would release me and liberate them. I wanted to support co-inquirers to notice particular issues, themes and categories within discussions as I was convinced this would encourage further identification of data.

I had, (took on and maintained), an active leadership function and role within the research process. I initially and consciously adopted a leadership role within the inquiry in order to hold the process together, literally rounding people up for meetings, organising administrative support, venues and additional resources. I failed to recognise that I was using organisational power in my relationships with the co-inquirers. In my mind I was being open but in theirs and despite their denials their behaviour indicated that they still considered me '*the boss*'.

I also took an early leadership function outside of the inquiry (although initially, I thought, this would just be to ensure organisational support it was only later in the project did I realise this role was essential to ensure the success of the project). This

early leadership role supported the formation of the group but would influence group process as the inquiry evolved and this is discussed in Chapters 6 and 7.

3.3 The Complexity of Power in the Initial Stages of the Inquiry

It was crucial that the inquiry created a sense of research community, meaningful participation, equality and collaboration leading to what Mead (2002: 31) describes as '*a diminished sense of hierarchy*'. I wanted participants to feel that: '*we were all in it together*'. This is an important concept considering the different roles and positions, (power relations), the inquirers' held within the organisation.

I wanted the group to have the space to allow organisational authority to be 'turned on its head', to be forgotten to allow participants to feel equally powerful, knowledgeable and have authority. This intention was difficult to realise because I and other inquirers were conflicted as we needed power and authority to achieve our aims. However, my intention was to try and develop the inquiry so participants felt safe allowing them to challenge entrenched and subconscious ideas of authority, prejudice, barriers to inclusion, hegemonic masculinity, institutional or personal racism as well as external threats. (In some ways this was achieved as co-inquirers reported feeling safe when asked in the anonymised questionnaire completed at the end of the research). One co-inquirer wrote;

CI 3: *'By the end of the meetings I felt confident in the process and I trusted that what I said was respected and considered'*

CI 9: *'Yes I felt safe'*

CI 11: *'Safe not fully I mean it is not therapy'*

Therefore from the beginning of the inquiry it was crucial to critically analyse my own social position (in terms of ethnicity, class, gendered identities, employment status and seniority), and encourage other participations to do the same. (Winter & Munn-Giddings; 2001). I first recognised how the multiple identities of the co-inquirers, (and therefore interlocking, interdependent and multiple oppressions), would influence and interplay within the group in the second reflection meeting. We did not want the inquiry to consciously perpetuate and maintain systems of dominance.

I totally underestimated the presence of power, particularly organisational power and failed to acknowledge it was a central theme throughout the establishment of the inquiry. I failed to truly acknowledge how it underpinned and connected the research subject and question, the process of change as well as the reflective process. I did attempt to balance out the concept of power and authority by sharing, amongst all co-inquirers the method and the literature. I believed that sharing knowledge meant sharing power. I also relied on the processes of co-operative inquiry such as; democratic participation which allows for the dissemination of shared knowledge equally altering the dynamics of power but this did not deal with the issue of organisational power. (Reason & Bradbury; 2009, Alexandrov; 2009 and McIntyre; 2008).

I hypothesised that we all had different forms of knowledge and different forms of power which we brought to the group but my position in the organisation dominated parts of the research activity. In hindsight I think it would have been preferable to counter organisational power by having an external facilitator and a female senior manager to co-sponsor the research and co-chair and to ensure co-chairing amongst the co-inquirers.

3.4 Early Reflections on the Co-operative Inquiry

I discovered some months into the research that co-inquirers had a plethora of interconnected and overlapping reasons to be involved in the inquiry. Some saw that participation would lead to personal growth whilst others were keen to contribute to what they appreciated as '*progressive practice development*'. Whilst others were simply motivated by intellectual and academic stimulation. Co-inquirers were, in the main, motivated by an opportunity to do '*something different*', opportunities for professional development, opportunities to challenge inequality, skill development and networking. Others were attracted by the collaborative method of working, or by being involved in a piece of work outside of the mainstream. Some were seeking membership of a group to challenge feelings of isolation whilst others wanted to be involved in a new way of working. These motivations were not mutually exclusive but intersected across the group. (Reason & Bradbury: 2009).

C8: *It was an interesting topic because I think it 'spoke to' the vast majority of social workers. It was interesting to be a part of, it had a high profile and we were making changes'.*

As social workers, I think the values and principles of co-operative inquiry, (challenging marginalisation and discrimination and participation), encouraged free thinking and a new level of confidence as the model appealed to the value base of the co-inquirers. Co-inquirers were attracted to the democratic nature of the method as it was in contrast to the normal business model adopted in the organisation. Inquirers were also interested in changing our '*near environments*' for the better. (Shaw: 2006).

The group brought with it an immense amount of resources, in terms of knowledge, experience (both life and professional). For example; three co-inquirers were regular trainers, two were qualified in psychoanalytical methods and another was studying these concepts. All were trained as social workers to construct safe spaces and all had the skills to facilitate and contribute to group health, dynamics and four, to differing levels, were emotionally attuned to unconscious group processes. These elements contributed to group.

The group had a solid foundation. We had clarity of purpose and an agreed contract. Communication within the group was open, consciously unguarded and task focused. I believe this meant the group employed, what Habermas (in Kemmis: 2001: 103) describes as, '*communicative action*' meaning the group was orientated towards; '*mutual understanding (first), unforced consensus about what to do, (second), and making communicative space(third) i.e. communicative action which bring people*

together around shared topical concerns, problems and issues' crucial for successful implementation of the research method.

This authenticity of communication allowed for the convergence between the complexities of the adaptive organisational systems and the inquirers. For example; co-inquirers openly identified the defences operating in the department that prevented father inclusion. This authenticity of communication and the emotion and commitment required by the co-inquirers encouraged the beginnings of authentic communication. I wrote in my reflective journal that; *I was feeling confident this would lead to significant benefits for the organisation as the inquiry matured*.

I think it important to reflect on the recruitment of co-inquirers. I specifically targeted some of the most respected social workers and managers in the organisation. I knew most of the co-inquirers well and identified those who could accept ambiguity whilst being innovative and creative. We recognised that we all had different roles within the organisation depending where we sat in the hierarchy; this was unique and, what I now recognise as, crucial to advancing the project aims. I wanted co-inquirers to be representative of the organisational hierarchy as the barriers to inclusion were at every level of the organisation. I also wanted managers as participants as this would allow greater influence in bringing about organisational change. (Seel: 2008).

An important consideration was the group's relationship with the wider organisation i.e. how was membership perceived by those not inquirers? All co-inquirers committed themselves to advancing professional practice, what is described by some as 'alignment'. Although all were committed, to varying degrees, to the organisation's aims I felt there were also feelings of estrangement, disaffection and separation from co-inquirers who were not able to be themselves. There were anxieties in the group about stepping outside of the strong organisational culture of 'SMART' working and action planning. (Mead: 2002). Initially co-inquirers perceived reflection as dangerous as there was no clear outcome.

Despite this we were able to analyse, in these early meetings, the conscious and unconscious reasons for resisting this change in practice. On reflection, we were able to identify that causality was complicated, elaborate and multi-ordered. We reflected on how we could overcome these resistances in particular we spoke of how we could introduce new social work practices differently to the 'norm'. We wanted a creative method that would empower and enable social workers to take ownership of the project's aims for themselves. This pre-occupied the early sessions although I think we lost sight of this once the project had gathered momentum. I was also conscious of what Armstrong, Bazalgette and Hutton (1994: 2) term the '*organisation in the mind*' which they describe as the; '*mental picture of the institution in its context which is informing the managers*' experience, shaping their behaviour and influencing their working relationships both overtly and covertly'.

(Early in the life of the co-operative inquiry, co-inquirers participated in a reflective exercise where we attempted to identify the emotional meaning and reality of the organisation for each co-inquiry. We were able to identify risk with the concomitant need to prioritise the need for systems of safety).

The inquiry was successfully launched because we negotiated with multiple stakeholders. These had to be identified, respected and be positively 'traversed'. The inquiry was also able to informally recruit senior managers who were 'supporters' and allies of the inquiry but who remained on its boundary. These 'supporters' had different expectations and demands and it was crucial to maintain a sophisticated level of communication through the initiation phase but also through the entire life of the inquiry. Indeed it was crucial to continually nurture these 'supporters' as well as identify new supporters and allies as the inquiry matured. (Charles & Glennie: 2002).

We also agreed that we did not want anyone else to join the group for the foreseeable future. We wanted to concentrate on developing our relationships, we wanted to build on the embryonic feelings of closeness and cohesion amongst us, we wanted to create a safe, reflective space and build on our learning and experience. Although it was challenging we closed the group to requests from others to join. I agreed to stay in touch with potential participants and agreed there may be space for involvement in the future. Listening to Reason, (1988: 45), I was keen to create a space that encouraged and nurtured '*free, out of role thinking*' allowing co-inquirers to take risks and move beyond the restrictions of current practice and systems. By giving co-inquirers confidence and encouragement and attending to group process allowed for discussion, debate and authentic collaborative communication. This is what I told myself. In reality, it was difficult to let go because I felt I owned the research and I was anxious about losing control to a method of participation that was alien to me which I describe in the next two chapters.

Conclusion

I have discussed the complexities of establishing a participative multiple methodology to research one's own organisation that values reflection. I have explained and reflected on preparing the organisation for the research, the recruitment of participants, the induction of those participants and describe the first cycle of reflection – action – immersion – reflection that describes one research cycle.

A number of preliminary findings were identified including:

- Issues of ownership,
- Power and control,
- The meaning of participation,
- The clarity over roles
- And the contract of participation.

There was benefit in having '*a practice run*'. It allowed the group to evolve, for participants to feel confident in the methodology and to experiment without pressure.

Chapters 6 analyses the implementation of the method and Chapter 7 the research findings.

Chapter 6: Implementation of the Co-operative Inquiry

1. Introduction

Application of the research methodology especially the analytical framework led the co-operative inquiry to investigate the process of the research, systems, complexity, emergence, organisational culture and the development of a model of organisational transformation that would work with natural human defences. We discovered through the process of co-operative inquiry concepts such as; power and power relations, gender and gender relations, group processes and group dynamics, roles and boundaries. All were essential components in the life of the research acting, on one hand, to facilitate the research aims whilst, on the other, to inhibit them. I want to mirror this experience for the reader and so integrate these themes throughout this chapter. (Huffington et al: 2007).

In this Chapter I analyse our initial findings which I explore thematically as the foundation for a further thematic analysis in Chapter 7. I continue to adhere to Heron's (1996: 102) guide of; what he would find of great interest in a report on a Co-operative Inquiry in structuring this Chapter. I reflect on the transformational dialogues, categories and themes generated from ten cycles of reflection-action-immersion-reflection. I identify an initial thematic pattern, (illustrated in Table 6.1), which emerged throughout the inquiry. By using this structure, I demonstrate knowledge creation validating the inquiry. The voices of the co-inquirers resonate throughout this chapter and the next. I describe the implementation of the research process to support others who want to adopt a similar methodology. I and the group were not overly concerned about demonstrating a thorough analysis of all the data generated, rather to think of the data differently and somewhat uniquely to stimulate opportunities for growth, action and experimentation. Using this method diverse interpretations are produced with this diversity stimulating further deliberation about alternative interpretations. (Winter & Munn-Goodings: 2001). I apply a critical lens because this acts as a form of competitive cross-validation and is a method to get 'nearer to the truth'. (Pawson: 2006: 144). This Chapter needs to be read with reference to Chapter 4 and Appendix 2.

Table 6.1 describes the different forms of knowing which were identified through the following processes:

1. Continuous reflection and participation with co-inquirers, (see Chapter 3: Epistemology and the application of the Four Steps to Analysis; A Reflective Framework (Description, Evaluation, Explanation and Application and the Heron's Framework of Knowing, allowed key themes and discourses to be identified.
2. The discourses were then further identified using the 4 stages of data analysis as described in Chapter 3.
3. Discourses were also identified through analysis of the transcripts and films of each co-inquiry meeting which were then reintroduced for further reflection by co-operative inquirers as described in Chapter 3.
4. Further themes and discourses were identified in supervision and feedback to the co-inquirers.

I then use these initially identified themes as heading and sub-headings in this analysis. During the intermediate stages of the research propositional knowing was palpable as was the experiential.

Table 6.1; An Initial Thematic Pattern and Findings When Attempting to Include Fathers

Themes identified by co-inquirers during reflective meetings	**Themes identified using Heron's Framework of Knowing**	**Discourses identified by co-inquiries from the transcripts**	**Discourses identified through triangulation and further supervisory analysis**
Keeping Social Workers Safe / Resistance (Practical knowing)	Containing Resistance (Presentational/ Practical knowing)	Multiple Roles as part of the inquiry (Presentational/ Practical knowing)	Power everywhere (Presentational/ Practical knowing)
Keeping it Real / Domestic violence (Practical knowing)	Power (Presentational/ Practical knowing)	Gender Relations The co-inquiry contributing to male dominance (Presentational/ Practical knowing)	
Sustainability (Practical knowing)	Influencing an organisation's culture (Propositional knowing)	Systems (Experiential knowing)	Infiltrating into organisational language (Propositional knowing)
Spreading the Word (Presentational knowing)	Critical Mass (Experiential knowing)	Taking on additional roles to encourage emergence (Experiential knowing)	Recognising the need for a systemic approach (Propositional knowing)
Data (ICS) or defence against anxiety? (Experiential knowing)	Blinded (Experiential knowing)	'circle of discrimination' or 'catch twenty-two' (Presentational knowing)	
The Group (Experiential knowing)	Facilitation and competition of Roles (Experiential knowing)		Blindness (Experiential knowing)

2. Keeping Social Workers Safe

The original research, and personal experience of co-inquirers, powerfully informed the co-inquiry that our first priority was to assist social workers feel confident and safe

to include fathers, (especially risky or violent fathers). The group unanimously supported this as our primary action.

(CI1) – '*We know if they* [social workers] *don't feel safe then they won't work with fathers and the rest of our work will be a waste of our time*'.

(CI7) – '*We need a clear simple system that all managers and social workers can rely on to keep them safe*'.

However, and as (CI3) argued; '*I am not sure whether every social worker, as standard safe practice, implements a safety plan for those women surviving domestic violence so we'll need to include children and women as well as our social workers in our plans*.'

(6th June 2010 p 6 – 7 and p 14 of the Co-operative Inquiry Meeting Transcripts)

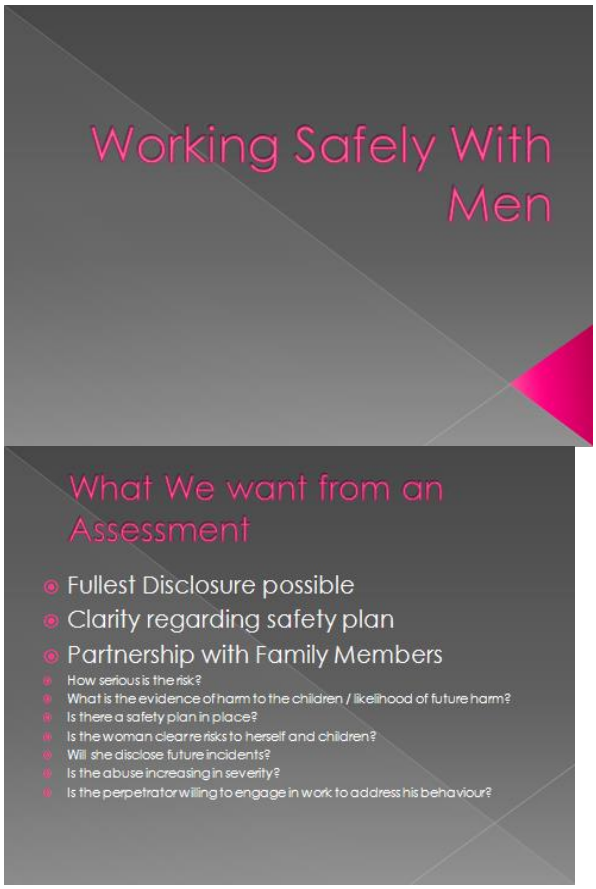
Interestingly, Maggie (a team manager and powerful ally to the research) felt that; '*yes lots of social workers are frightened especially 'the younger ones'. I'm not bothered and I have never had a problem but I am a grandmother and I know men and I project a sense of authority. This works with men who will respond to me but I have learnt this*'.

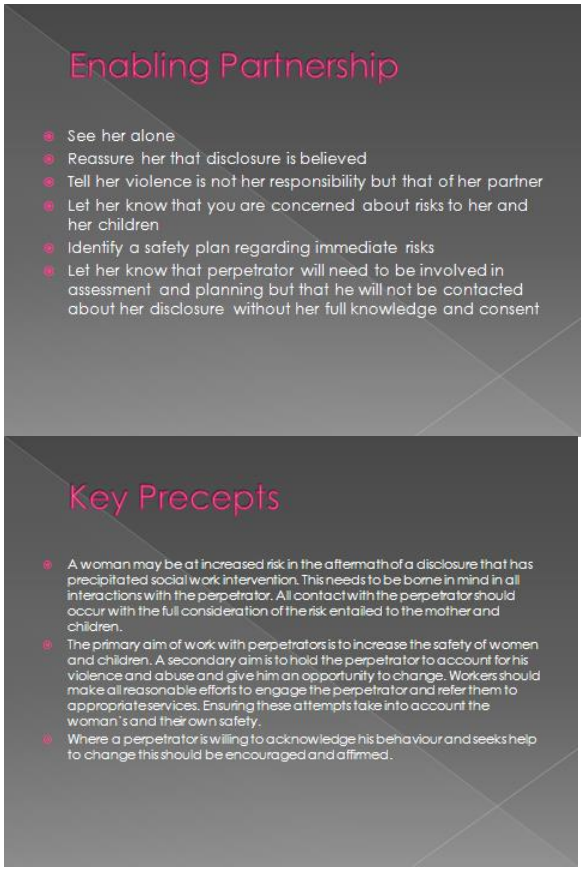
We [the co-inquirers] had to confront the topic of violence '*head on*' otherwise social workers would always have a valid reason not to include the father. By addressing the fear of violence, social workers had to confront their own fears and prejudices about working with fathers. We reflected that by taking on such a difficult first topic this sent a powerful message to staff that the co-operative inquiry was serious and that the organisation would no longer silently collude. On reflection, this activity was empowering for staff. Historically, fathers and abusive men have maintained power, (because of the fear of working with them), meaning they avoided responsibility and were not held accountable for their actions.

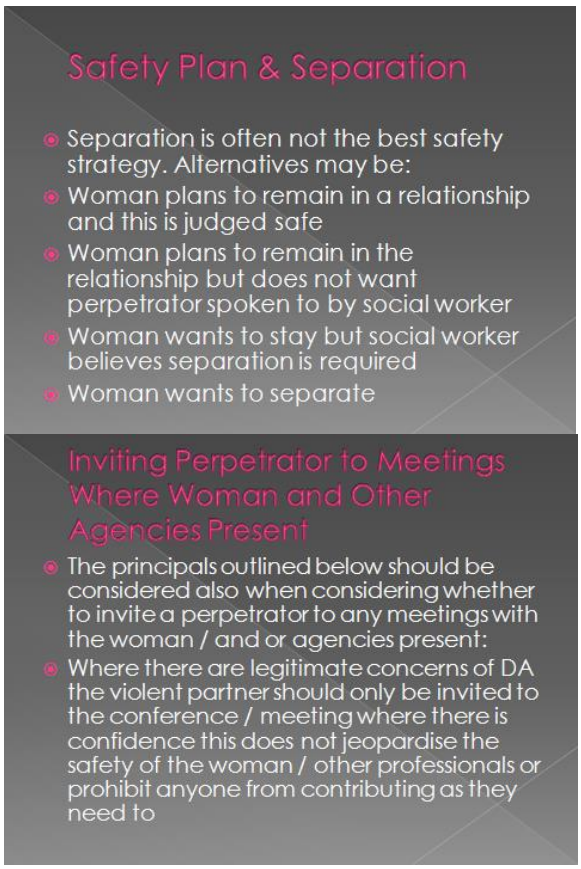
On the 8th September 2010, in the fourth co-operative inquiry group CI 13, (a nationally recognised expert in working with perpetrators), presented a system of safety planning (see next page). From this three other co-inquirers agreed to develop a safety planning process and all co-inquirers then agreed to support its implementation within the Service.

Our plan was to introduce a system of safety planning for managers and staff. (There was an expectation this was already in place when working with survivors of domestic violence and their children although the inquiry discovered it was not universally understood or implemented). A first draft was written jointly by CI0, a social worker and myself and shared with the group for comment, re-drafted and then signed off by the Director. A training and communication plan was developed by the group to inform all social workers and managers of this new process. Each co-inquirer would raise the topic of safety planning in their respective team meetings and arrange for a colleague from DVIP, (Domestic Violence Intervention Project), to complete a one and half hour training programme on safety planning for each team.

Safety Planning Presented to the Co-Inquirers on the 8th of September 2010







From June through to October 2010 safety planning for children, women and for staff was introduced throughout the Service. We had agreement that safety planning would be discussed at all future domestic violence courses as well as other trainings such as working with perpetrators. It was also included as one of the mandatory trainings for all new managers and included as part of all new staff inductions. Safety planning was introduced within the family group conference system. Safety planning was proceduralised and added to the Service's electronic procedural system; Tri-x. Data of the numbers of risk assessments, incident reports and incident meetings was then collected and a review (audit) process was introduced to ensure the system had been established and was being implemented. This acted as one of our feedback processes.

In the first six months of the project it felt we achieved very little and it was only after the safety planning system had been fully integrated into daily practice that the inquiry began to observe incremental change.

I now recognise that the safety planning system acted as a form of containment reducing social workers' need to defend against anxiety through paternal alienation. Social workers participated and their anxieties were thought about by the co-inquirers with social workers feeling '*held in the organisation's mind*' again reducing defensive behaviours. As a group we had identified that managing social workers' anxiety was our primary task. We motivated change by generating awareness and developing a psychological '*safety-net*' or a containing system by reducing the threat. Put simply, our actions reduced resistance.

1.2 Containing Resistance

Through its primary task, the unconscious role of the co-inquiry was to contain basic human anxieties over annihilation. The organisation's troubled state, (about including fathers), was managed through what Sorensen (in Reid 2005: 23) termed the integration of the group's ability to '*bear witness'*. Social workers experientially, became aware that the inquiry group was an object that was receptive to their communications and needs and tolerated social workers' anxieties and hostilities. (Hoxter: 1981). I was witness to what Bion (1963) described as '*reverie*'. The group had calmly received, interpreted and provided meaning to the organisation's projections. (Obholzer; 2002, Roberts; 2002; Palmer 1999).

There were daily examples where social workers needed to be reminded to include fathers in assessments or presentations at child protection conferences or legal planning meetings. Chairs of child protection conferences were still not using the initial conference as an opportunity to either identify the father or consider a safety plan to his engagement despite co-inquirers and managers reporting they were '*pushing the fathers' agenda'*.

Not until the safety planning process had been institutionalised and clearly communicated across the Children-in-Need Service did the inquiry start to see social workers identifying fathers. Resistance has featured throughout the life of the project which, on reflection, I now consider as evidence that the project was encouraging people to practice differently.

a. Resistance

External of the Children-in-Need Service there was a group of practitioners vehemently opposed to the research's aims and objectives. Initially, this group had no involvement in the project and so I was slightly dumbfounded when I received a formal request from the Women's Group, (which is a sub group of MARAC, in April 2010), that the inquiry be terminated immediately. A similar formal request had also been sent to my line manager and the director of Children's Social Care. At this point, and again through supervision, I realised I needed to make an ally of the resistance in the system.

On the 26th July 2010, I and the specialist domestic violence social worker met with the Women's Group. The tone of the meeting was set when one of the group; came into the room and stated; '*I've just witnessed a domestic violence incident on the street*'. Despite this, there was useful and informative dialogue. Members of the group pointed out their concerns that including fathers would exacerbate risk to women and children. They were horrified that the Fatherhood Institute was involved thinking the Institute was a similar organisation to that of Fathers for Justice and asked me to reconsider. We talked for two hours clarifying the basis of their assumptions and fears. I confirmed that the project would not commence until a safety planning system was operating in the Service which appeared to allay some of their fears. The meeting concluded with the Women's Group requesting that I establish a parallel group, (to that of the co-operative inquiry), to balance what they perceived to be an overt extension of male power being exerted from the inquiry.

My first thoughts were equally defensive as I considered firstly confrontation and then withdrawing, (fight or flight). On reflection, I wrote to the group and asked that we meet again to discuss the possibilities of establishing a second group. (I thought this would have analytical value and also provide further legitimacy to research validity). I met with two of the representatives the following week and they agreed to establish a group of social workers and others to act as a counter weight to the co-operative inquiry although this did not materialise. Subsequently, I invited the Women's Group to identify a representative to attend the co-operative inquiry. A representative was chosen but despite five invitations she never attended and the resistance dematerialised.

On reflection, I perceived and understood my colleagues' resistance as a conscious and logical reaction when one considered their perspective. Their viewpoint was based on a context of power difference, centuries of the male abuse of women and daily reminders of the continuation of that abuse. From this perspective it was totally legitimate that the Women's Group were highly defended and reluctant to consider the project's objectives as safe and useful.

Other resistance was more subtle. Although senior managers supported the project and it was a strategic aim of the Service, all of the work to develop and implement the project's activities had to be undertaken outside of office hours or at weekends.

b. Containing Resistance

I realised that the inquiry became a micro social system of the wider Children in Need Service. This allowed us to implement a comparative research process and study the conditions and effects of the assorted types of social action by the co-inquirers. Understanding the resistance was our first challenge. Reflection, through the co-operative inquiry methodology, allowed us to allay suspicion of new and potentially dangerous ideas as we tested out how to surmount anxiety and resistance. Co-inquirers, as part of the action phase, would go out and support others sharing difficulties, dilemmas and problems.

Like the project itself, co-inquirers evolved in confidence, knowledge and in their relationships. In the first six months we focused on group process, testing out the co-

operative inquiry methodology of action and reflection concentrating on improving the safety of social workers. (See Chapter 3).

By June 2011 anxieties had diminished when a team manager and co-inquirer (CI4) said;

CI4 - '*Its aligning* [the project with daily practice]*; the information and procedure about safety planning is becoming, I would say, quite well ingrained within the teams especially in my team'*.

Me – '*What evidence do you have of that*?'

CI4 – '*In day to day discussions with social workers, in the analysis of assessments, in case notes and when supervising the deputy team managers*'.

CI3 – '*In care plans*'?

CI4 – '*Yes and by social workers who are now using the Barnardos Risk Assessment Tool*'

(22nd June 2011 p3 of the co-operative inquiry meeting transcripts)

Maggie, said; '*I have implemented the safety planning process in the team, I think we did it anyway but not formally or consciously. It means those workers who were resistant now have no choice whilst it encourages others and we have been talking about it so yes it is influencing the way we work'*.

The primary focus on safety and practice normalised working with fathers, it suggested to all those who came to the Local Authority that as a social worker in this borough you are expected to identify and include the father in your assessment and you will be supported to achieve this expectation safely.

1.3 Multiple Roles as Part of the Inquiry

As the inquiry matured we began to realise that we were acting out different competing roles in both the action and reflection phases of the inquiry. I think role theory best explains our behaviour. For example; I am using role theory as one explanation for the apparent silencing of the female co-inquirers for the first thirty minutes of each meeting. (See Chapter 7).

Role theory conceives that human activities are directed by expectations held by the individual and by other people. These expectations are consistent with the numerous roles individuals perform or enact in their everyday lives.

Applying this to the co-inquiry each member had particular expectations of one another in their roles as social workers, managers, fathers, mothers, husbands and wives, teachers and students etc. (Malin: 2000).

We each have to manage a multiplicity of roles in our daily lives. We do this because it increases individual privileges, resources and leads to financial gain; it augments social status whilst ameliorating failure in any one single role and so enhances one's sense of competence and facilitates greater self-worth. (Pietromonaco, Manis & Frohardt-Lane: 1986).

The research methodology asked that co-inquirers accept a number of additional roles; as advocates and champions within and outside of the system, as co-researchers and as co-subjects. I do think that because our roles were institutionalised they were rooted directly and indirectly in the division of labour, i.e. what actions were taken on by whom. However, maintaining these multiple roles can lead to role strain or role conflict because of contradictory demands and competing expectations. It was important that each co-inquirer was aware of this so as not to overburden them with too many role relationships.

I increasingly became aware of how all the inquirers held multiple identity constructions based on social, professional, cultural and gender expectations. We had to hold onto a multiplicity of identities because our identities were being continually reformed, modified, maintained and reshaped by the social relations within the inquiry and externally. For example; I found it nearly impossible to stop myself performing my role as a manager. (See Chapter 5 & 7). Positively for the inquiry, co-inquirers held collective identities; as social workers (a professional identity) and as co-inquirers meaning there was a strong sense of '*WE*' in the group which was a viable foundation for the collective self and was further supported through convergence, the timing and the structure of the meetings. We also shared socially constructed knowledge about particular professional social work practices which we wanted to transmit further.

In terms of my role in the inquiry, I did encourage co-inquirers to try to have different expectations of myself and each other.

However, it proved impossible to remove the hierarchical roles with the accompanying perceptions of power, bestowed on me by the organisation, from the minds of other co-inquirers. Put simply; my colleagues in the co-operative inquiry deferred to me because '*I was the boss*'. This may have happened because roles consist of a code of behaviour and a set of norms that act as a procedure or a modus operandi to steer and predict behaviour. Roles specify what actions must be accomplished and what objectives should be sought. Role theory maintains; a substantial amount of everyday human behaviour occurs simply because people are executing their prescribed roles and functions. (Craib: 1998).

As Winter and Munn-Giddings (2001) write there is a temptation for facilitators to dominate, even dominate the analysis. I became aware of my tendency to want to contribute too much during reflection meetings which is why we introduced in September 2010, a rotating co-facilitator process so we all shared and supported one another in interpretation and in guiding the group.

1.4 Power Everywhere

This brings us to a further discussion on how power featured within the co-operative inquiry. Increased and shared understandings between co-inquiry members led to feelings of empowerment within the group. Co-inquirers could see that their shared reflections were being included in plans for actions and integrated into the good practice model being developed which can be located in Chapter 7. For me this meant the group provided a framework challenging the institutional structure evidencing what Barrett (2009) describes as; '*power from within'*.

A caveat here, I postulate that greater collaboration was unconsciously avoided for many reasons. One of those reasons was I was unable to forgo my leadership role. By maintaining this role, I preserved a sense of hierarchy and dependency meaning the group did not maximise the opportunity for meaningful continuous collaboration. (Heron: 1996). This was highlighted by an academic from Loughborough University who in a correspondence a few days after observing the inquiry group meeting of March 2011 challenged me asking; '*To what extent do you think your position in the organisation influences engagement in the process*?'

This observation was sobering and legitimised my own feelings. Despite my sensitivities and the delicate manner I thought I was employing to manage this research the reality was that the group gave me authority because I was a senior manager and I had the power to affect their careers. At the time I was able to explain this away by applying Jones' (1995) view where he introduces the concept of '*actualisation hierarchies'* which allows the group to function in a way that maximises the organism's potential. I failed to acknowledge how others perceived my use of power.

In considering authentic collaboration, (questioning the validity of the research), my relationship with the co-inquirers and the quality of trust between us was affected by my competing roles. Foucault (1980) wrote that power resides not with the individual but with the positions they occupy and manner in which discourses about these positions operate within organisations. I reproduced hierarchies of power and knowledge in the group that put me in a position where I '*knew better'* and to whom decisions should fall.

Critically, I totally underestimated and so failed to confront and solve the problems of power, influence and hierarchy. As Seel (2008: 8) quoting Boja reminds us that; '*power is always relevant in organisational life*'. Conversely, power was used externally by co-inquirers to achieve their aims. I found myself in a contradictory position as I realised that power inhibited the true potential of the inquiry, however we needed power to achieve change. (Stacey: 2003).

What I now realise is that it would have been preferential to develop, launch and manage this project with a female senior manager as a co-sponsor.

2. *Keeping it Real*

Research and our own reflections informed us that we all lacked the knowledge and skills to include fathers. (Ashley et al: 2011).

During the co-operative inquiry meeting of the 22nd June 2010 Co-inquirer 5 suggested; '*we need to build a bank of knowledge and skills about how to identify and work with men* [fathers]'

And CI 3 contributed that; '*this must include how we work with mothers so they disclose the identity of the father', because 'we must be pragmatic and engage violent fathers as they are the vast percentage of the men we come into contact with*'. (CI11).

CI4 recommended that; '*this should be an action we all work on through the life of the project and involve all social workers from across the Service and others such as the Family Group Conference Co-ordinators*'.

I felt we needed to identify '*likeminded people'* from across the service who shared our passion for working with fathers. My action from this co-operative inquiry meeting was to build a bank of supporters not only across Children's Social Care but also Children's Services and other partner agencies. (Appendix 5 provides a range of examples of the actions identified in the co-operative inquiry meetings).

I had one particular person in mind. A thirty year qualified team manager I have already referred to in this Chapter as Maggie, who had assumed the project's research aims and principles but had remained on the boundary of the group. Indeed, Maggie became a case study and a comparator as her team were not represented in the co-operative inquiry.

I recall saying at the co-operative inquiry held on the 13th October 2010;

'*I appreciate that Maggie, in the last few months, has placed four children with their non-residential fathers which is great especially as all these men were from Black and or ethnic minority groups and there is a real influence in that team about work with fathers even though they are not represented at this co-inquiry group. We all need to learn from Maggie and other practitioners; we need to collect evidence of good practice*.'(P19 of the co-operative inquiry meeting transcripts)

Maggie remained a powerful ally throughout the life of the research always willing to contribute learning. We used the KPIs co-inquirers constructed to compare practice between the 5 teams represented on the co-operative with Maggie's team. Maggie agreed to be interviewed and would regularly voice her support to the project in management meetings. She would regularly volunteer case examples. Maggie would also come and ask for assistance when she could not identify services for fathers or needed assistance to think through interventions.

2.1 & 2.2 Power & Gender Relations

I experience power as relational, productive and as a network of social boundaries that restrain and permit actions for all. From this perspective power is a; '*multiplicity of forced relations*'. (Foucault: 1979:92). No human relationship is exempt from power. Reflecting on how power influenced the implementation of the research methodology; power existed in every detail and through the entire process. What we did not realise was power would always act to limit the possibilities of the research. (Gaventa & Cornwall: 2009).

For example; the male co-inquirers spoke a great deal more than the female inquirers especially at the beginning of each meeting. I queried whether one or two of the female co-inquirers had internalised a cruel father figure or were they as a group, or individually, submitting 'admiringly' to powerful males or as Riviere (2010) described, were they hiding their masculine skills adopting a position of compliance with the men in the group? (Maguire: 2004). I reflected that the men in the group may have been unconsciously defending against fears of castration, (a defence against loss of control and the erosion of male power), by grouping together as a form of compensation in a modern world where feelings of male fragility and womb envy are common place.

Gender and ethnic roles however are not inevitable as they are constructed through social and cultural forces and social functions. (Boghossian: 1998). I postulate that the co-operative inquiry, as a mixed gender group within the social work system mirrored the different power structures inherent within the organisation. I now realise that separation and internalisation of gendered identities served, in the inquiry, as a model of domination where masculinity rejected or devalued what is consigned to femininity whilst, at the same time, attempting to control it. The gender system of domination, which pervades organisational and institutional structures was, unbeknown to participants, continuously replicated in the inquiry. It enveloped the inquiry and led to what Benjamin (1995) describes as; *'othering'* of women in the group. This happened most notably at the start of each inquiry meeting. On reflection we should have involved participants in discussions about gender and we should have included gender relations from a male perspective in our discussions and specifically recognised this in the contract of participation. (See Appendix 4). Because we did not we *'problematised'* women whilst maintaining male privilege.

I also reflected on whether the male co-inquirers' need to dominate the early conversations as a response, in the men, to a sense of male / female competitiveness. Thinking pragmatically, it may have been an unconscious attempt, by the men in the group, to establish power by establishing a set of rules about the relationships in the co-inquiry mirroring that of wider society.

Reflecting on the power of social norms, I now consider that social workers may exclude fathers as a form of role conformity which explains why there was a blindness to father inclusion for many years. In turn these social norms are reinforced by biological inheritance, the co-inquirers' social constructions of gender and identity together with cultural norms especially what it means to be a man in a relationship with a woman.

I have concluded that I unconsciously supported the other males in the group because I did not want to expose gender inequalities in operation. (Blacklock: 2011).

2.3 The Co-inquiry Contributing to Male Dominance

We should have had greater discussions about feminism within the co-operative inquiry as this would have allowed for an empowering approach challenging the gender relations operating below the surface of the group.

3 Sustainability

We knew anecdotally and quantitatively that practice was changing and fathers were being included and so we became anxious about how we could ensure that the change we were facilitating would be sustainable.

'*We've all been involved in projects where it all feels good when you are sitting around talking about it but as soon as the project concludes the learning is lost, the processes forgotten and we return to previous practice'*.

(CI3 11th May 2011 p4 of the co-operative inquiry meeting transcripts)

'*Yes we want this effort to be worthwhile and so we need to be creative so it sticks in people's minds and in our daily business. I don't want to waste my time*.'

(CI12 11th May 2011 p6 of the co-operative inquiry meeting transcripts)

The issue of sustainability versus the co-inquirers' previous experience threatened the project because if co-inquirers felt there was no long-term value in the project they would lose motivation and leave the project. It was therefore fundamental to invest considerable time to institutionalise our new ways of working.

We started to directly integrate the aims and objectives of the project within existing organisational systems and processes. For example: we included father inclusion in the strategic aims of Children's Social Care and the Children-in-Need Services in the strategic plan for 2010 and 2011; by 2012 our focus was on assessing perpetrators of violence. Father inclusion was also included; in recruitment questions, in job descriptions of social workers and managers, the induction process and staff appraisals.

(Chapter 4 and Appendix 4 provides a range of examples of the actions identified in the co-operative inquiry meetings).

3.1 Influencing an Organisation's Culture

A paternal pledge was written and became a powerful symbol of the drive for sustainability acting as a guarantee of the Council's commitment to all fathers. Each

co-inquirer attempted to have the paternal pledge added to different policies and procedures. We changed other systems to promote sustainability. For example; the monthly case file audits were altered to include questions about father engagement and inclusion in care planning throughout the s.17, s47 and s.31 stages of involvement and the quality assurance framework was amended to measure the inclusion of fathers. We also re-organised and reconfigured the practice around the Referral and Advice Team.

CI14: '*There is a great deal of individual commitment* [to include fathers] *across the teams but there remain a number of workers who hold strong views that fathers should not be worked with. We need to ensure organisational systems are established to ensure at least a minimum level of engagement to assess risk'*. This view encouraged three co-inquirers to articulate for a change in design of ICS for assessment templates to be redesigned to encourage the inclusion of fathers.

(28th March 2011 p7 of the co-operative inquiry meeting transcripts).

3.2 Systems

In our minds system changes would encourage sustainability. For example; the audit of child protection conferences began to include; questions about whether the father was included in the report, invited and attended the conference and was included in the child protection plan. Performance information about father inclusion was starting to be developed. Procedures were written, the common assessment was redesigned, whilst one team re-organised their entire system to be father inclusive. We were able to test out our thinking over sustainability in the inquiry when one of the most committed and respected inquirers left the organisation. (See Chapter 7).

3.3 Infiltrating into Organisational Language

The inquiry had infiltrated into social relations as well as many forms of the organisation. (Kemmis & McTaggart: 1998). '*With a name, an identity, a regular time slot and a physical space*' [Breaking down Barriers] '*participants ideas were validated as to the primary purpose of the project*' (Barrett: 2009: 233).

I postulate that this contributed to a change in the organisational sub-culture, quoting one co-operative inquirer:

'*It is becoming a cultural norm that we speak to fathers as much as we speak to mothers when we undertake health, education or police checks*'. We thought this would have a knock on effect. Our strategy was that: if one service is asking these questions of others then this will instigate other departments to do the same. (Chapter 9 addresses this point from a systemic perspective). In using Maggie's team as a yard stick she reinforced this point. Maggie reported:

'There has been an increase in the number of new referrals coming to my team that already has the fathers' name and some even an address and

telephone number. My deputy managers are asking more questions about fathers and there has definitely been a greater focus on the paternal extended families at FGCs. Conference chairs are asking more questions about fathers' but we have much more to do especially in giving social workers more skills to work with men and more support to managers in supervision when working with male abuse.' This quote from Maggie acts as a '*worked example'* of how the co-operative inquiry was influencing practice '*on the ground*'.

4 Spreading the Word

On the 27th July 2010 we realised that the project would be unsuccessful if we failed to articulate our aims to the wider professional community of Children's Services. To maximise the opportunity to include fathers they [fathers] need to be identified at the earliest opportunity and services need to intervene as early as possible. That opportunity is either at or prior to the child's birth. This meant we had to include colleagues from universal health services, (midwifery, health visitors, the Family Nurse Partnership and also Early Years' services).

At the 8th September 2010 co-operative inquiry meeting we discussed and developed our 'external' strategy. From my experience of attending and presenting different initiatives and practices to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB), I knew this would be a forum that would offer our inquiry legitimacy and authority as did re-presenting the inquiry to the Senior Management Team of Children's Services which I did in November 2010 and again in March and November 2011.

4.1 Critical Mass

The March 2011 LSCB meeting was a defining moment in the life of the inquiry allowing conversations about the inclusion of fathers to happen amongst professionals in many other settings. For example; the Director of Universal Health Services asked me to present the research and recommendations to her senior management team who then developed their own strategy to include fathers.

There followed invitations by the managers responsible for health visitors and midwives to present the work of the project. After that a group of paediatricians from two local hospitals asked that we attend their monthly developmental session and '*on it went'* an incremental increase in awareness, emergence change and interconnectivity. I can only describe this as a; *'continuously expanding evolutionary pattern of influence upon different overlapping systems'* which defines the methodology we employed. (Seel: 2008: 6). Each meeting had the same agenda; a presentation of the research, a discussion about organisational and professional context and then we would develop a plan, using the 7 point recommendations developed in the co-inquiry to develop inclusive practice. This resulted in the NHS Trust for the borough having a meaningful strategic and operational plan to include fathers.

The positive reaction from LSCB members ignited the project, the co-operative inquiry members as well as colleagues in Children's Social Care. This was a '*transformational dialogue'* as was the presentation of the project at the Department of Education to Professor Eileen Munro and Tim Laughton MP, (the then Minister for Children's Services), as part of the Munro Review, also in March 2011. This acted as the tipping point of the project releasing energy into the system which was now perceived by most people in the organisation with authority, legitimacy and power.

The inquiry was given renewed energy and our aims became possible. For example; no longer did I need to think about when it was strategically appropriate to talk about fathers.

'Critical mass' was generated through the maturation of relationships in the group. In observing the co-operative inquiry group their patterns of behaviour had changed as did the group dynamics as co-inquirers became familiar with one another. *'Surface'* defensive behaviours slowly diminished evidencing greater collaboration.

4.2 Taking on Additional Roles to Encourage Emergence

The co-inquirers took up additional roles as part of their inquiry. As the inquiry evolved it became a significant part of each inquirer's life as colleagues spoke informally about the increasing profile of the co-inquiry's activities. One reason for this was that co-inquirers' believed that their positions within the organisations and as practitioners would be strengthened and secured. In turn the integration of the project's aims into the daily business of the organisation influenced beliefs and attitudes amongst workers, crucial, in bringing about change in the organisation. (Rothbard, Philips & Dumas: 2005, Malin: 2000).

4.3 Recognising the Need for a Systemic Approach

There are many examples of our change strategy. In brief we approached every system, starting in one system, consuming that system ensuring all processes included the inclusion of fathers learning as we went the best way to transmit our agenda to others. After the Children in Need Service had been 'saturated' we then slowly reflected on our learning evolving our approach and then transmitting this evolution in practice to other systems. This strategy is explained and analysed in Chapter 9. For example:

CI5 'Each [child in need*] team has an identified fathers' champion and we have audited each team and we've gone back to them and presented our findings. Each team now has a plan to include fathers although we had to re-present the safety planning process in two of the teams.'*

CI8 'It's happening not necessarily in team meetings but in supervisions and also just in discussion about initial and core assessments. I do think we need to have a more detailed and honest discussion though in team meetings and that has not happened yet.'

CI4: 'I am now sitting on the ICS development group and I am trying to influence everyone so they include fathers on the new single assessment template.'

'CI3 and I (CI5) are working with workforce development and the deputy team manager's development group. We are talking a lot about supervision and father inclusion'.

CI8: 'I am doing the same with the newly qualified social work group and I have become the fathers' champion in Youth Offending. Funny I, (CI7), have taken on the same role in Leaving Care'.

CI4: 'I've restructured the R&A team so we are now father inclusive and I am confident this will have a knock on effect.'

C110: 'I have now introduced this to my colleagues in the Performance Team'.

(Pages 14 and 15 of the 16th February 2011 co-operative inquiry meeting transcripts)

In February 2011 I informally spoke to Maggie who confirmed again that practice, systems and culture was changing. Maggie provided a few examples:

'*I have recruited two newly qualified social workers and as part of their induction they have already received training on working with fathers. My deputy managers went on their development day and were given reflective supervision and the topic was working with abusers and perpetrators and how to manage their supervisees' feelings. From my perspective we now have that fathers' worker in and he is great*'.

Co-inquirers were presenting, encouraging conversations and influencing systems, through connectivity, such as the Children and Young People's Group, a MARAC sub group, the Teenage Parent Strategic Forum, social workers' team meetings, the Equalities Group, the Community Safety Strategic Group, Placement Analysis Group, Legal Services monitoring group, the DTM development Group, and the NQSW group (and the list goes on). We also wrote regular news releases that featured in the Council's electronic press and the LSCB newsletter. In hindsight, the inclusion of fathers started to emerge first in the Children-in-Need Service, with the transmission widening to Children's Social Care Service and then Children's Services and wider partners.

5. Data or Defence Against Anxiety?

The Council has impressive data gathering capacities, despite this; it took several months and on-going negotiation and advocacy to have a performance analyst allocated to the project. He became CI10 and attended his first meeting on the 16th

February 2011. Our task, in this meeting, was to develop and then '*use data collection system/s to regularly assess patterns of use in services, and identify areas where fathers are not being included to focus communication and services'*. (Fatherhood Institute: 2010 p 8).

Very simply; there was no methodology or system to collect fathers' information on any system in operation in the Council. CI10 attended each co-inquiry group and using the expert knowledge of the group in the computations and complications of ICS we slowly formulated a method to record fathers. Detail of this methodology is available upon request.

The entire two hour transcript for the co-operative inquiry meeting of the 28th March 2011 records how the methodology was conceived. We wanted to devise a system that recorded when children were placed with fathers or paternal extended family and then measure whether there had been an increase during the life of the project. I knew this would powerfully reinforce the project as every child placed with their father or paternal extended family rather than requiring state care, would save the Council thousands of pounds a year.

By June 2011, a methodology was being piloted. The group's intention was that by the end of the year this performance information would be added to the monthly Local Performance Indicator Report which was read by senior managers.

The performance information also became an important measure, (in the minds of the co-inquirers), of the success of the research inquiry and it was a point of discussion in each inquiry group meeting between June and October 2011 as the methodology was honed and more and more data became available. Implementation of this methodology within the Service provides evidence of accumulative change, interconnectivity and system changes because the inquiry could clearly evidence an increase in the numbers of fathers assessed by social workers from the start to the end of the project.

5.1 Blinded

Our focus on data meant we became *'blind'*. For example our *'blindness'* was particularly harmful to children and families from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds where time and reflection is required to assess, understand parenting influences, diversities and life experience which we avoided. In some ways we were *'blinded'* to issues of diversity in the group. For example: only now, in writing up the research, do I recognise we should have discussed how the Black and ethnic minority co-inquirers perceived the white inquirers as members of the dominant culture.

We were also blinded to how gender was influencing the group process.

CI5: '*I think it is worth thinking about female social workers' feelings when they go and meet these abusive men and the power dynamic even a power struggle which exists between them. We need to support our workers think about this in supervision*'.

(CI15 13th October 2010 p23 – 24 of the co-operative inquiry meeting transcripts)

What we did not do as a group of men and women was have a conversation about the difficulties surrounding the construction of gender, which played out in the group. Maguire (2004) argues this difference affects the analytical encounter therefore affecting the processes, the quality of analysis and the outcomes of this inquiry. Indeed, as a group we also avoided talking about ethnicity impacting on the quality of analysis. *'Race*' needed to be named in the inquiry in greater detail than just thinking about the needs of children and parents from Black and ethnic minority families. If we had spoken about ethnicity, race, racism and its impact in the group this would have demonstrated to those Black and ethnic minority co-inquirers a willingness by us all to find a common language and ground.

5.2 'Circle of Discrimination' or 'Catch Twenty-Two'

On reflection, in a sense a 'circle of discrimination' or 'catch twenty-two' unconsciously existed in the inquiry where sexism, racism and organisational defense and denial operated; concepts which contribute to the perpetuation of institutional sexism, racism and a perpetuation of a lack of confidence and competence in working with difference. One of the most powerful insights of this experience has been the moral justification of racist acts based on a racist discourse infatuated with the minutia of discernible and exterior difference. This translates into not interpreting differences as pathological which is exactly what happened in the inquiry again impacting on the quality of analysis in the co-inquiry.

6. The Group

CI1: '*I was wondering if we can be clear then about what we are going to do and who is going to do what between now and the next meeting*'.

CI6: '*I will do* (present) *the case studies, two case studies*'.

CI3: '*Yeah I will bring a case study back from my team; I have got a couple in mind*'.

CI9: '*CI6 has been talking about revisiting issues of domestic violence and safety planning for staff in a team meeting and group supervision, it will not hurt to keep it on the agenda every few months*'.

(8th September 2010 p25 of the co-operative inquiry meeting transcripts)

By the October 2010 meeting the group's focus was on improving the implementation of the methodology through reflection on internal processes and procedures and on the progress of the actions from the previous meeting.

CI1: '*These meetings and the work we're doing outside of the group, the whole thing is an experiment*'.

CI4: '*That is the philosophy behind it*'.

CI1: '*We will test out what we think works*'.

CI12: '*We are trying to test out how we overcome those psychological barriers that prevent workers from talking to men. Once we've discovered some successful techniques then we will tell social workers about it*'.

Also on the same day co-inquirers reflected on how they had worked through their own defences in relation to including fathers.

C1: 'I recognise I was complicit in the exclusion of men and even after all this time I can easily understand it let's face it there are some right bastards out there'.

C3: 'I was often fearful as I said at the beginning and in the past this prevented me from working with men. Now I have the support of my manager and supervisor and the safety plan. This has allowed me to not be so fearful but I have to be honest if we did not have these things in place I would stop. It's just not worth it'.

C5: 'I think about my father at every one of these meetings and I have thought much more about him since we started this work. It is tough because he was violent to my mother and me and my brother. I have tried to shed my prejudices and those associations and I have greater awareness in my practice now'.

C8: 'It has played out here I think too. Some of us were more enthusiastic about working with men than others and I have witnessed some of my colleagues in the room get more involved; we have each gone on our own journeys in relation to this research'.

(13th of October 2010 p23 of the co-operative inquiry meeting transcripts)

There is clear evidence, in these transcript examples, that the co-inquirers were '*agents of change'* working within and across the system and its sub systems endorsing and sponsoring the inclusion of fathers but also acting as role models to colleagues and peers. This indicated that the co-operative inquiry had, using Stokes (2002) parlance, '*a work group mentality*' meaning that participants were able to mobilise their capacities for co-operation, work with the presenting reality, whilst valuing the different contributions made by each participant. They volunteered to support each other and me to achieve the aims of the group instead of doing this in a routine way influenced by their own needs. This evidences implementation of the method as explained in Chapter 3.

I reflected, within one co-inquiry how in every meeting it took the group thirty minutes to ease into the culture of the inquiry. It seemed to take them time to remember the principles of the group process, get into role and to remember that our shared activity was safe and different from the usual meetings and, change management processes, used in the Council.

There was a lot of interest in the co-operative inquiry from colleagues from across the Service as well as from the wider system. During the eighteen months of the project there were nineteen separate requests to join the group. All were respectfully rebuffed except for the newly appointed fathers' worker who became CI11and the performance analyst who became C10.

Interestingly, a number of colleagues had attempted to join the group surreptitiously appearing in our meeting room at the start of co-inquiry meetings. All were respectfully asked to leave but were invited to return at a later stage. Between April 2010 and June 2011 two respected academics were invited to observe two different co-operative inquiry meetings. These activities reinforced validity. Having the inquiry process externally and expertly observed contributed to the process of reflection about the inquiry's methodological rigour.

6.1 Facilitation and the Competition of Roles

Whilst in the facilitator role, and through supervision, I recognised the existence of traditional masculine communication styles (for example; humour, repartee and banter), and that these were not conducive to traditional psychotherapeutic approaches which are geared to more traditional feminine styles of communication. (Seager & Thummel: 2009). I tried to adapt the space to both forms of communication styles. In hindsight, I should have introduced a model of co-facilitator (2 co-inquirers; one male and one female), earlier into the inquiry process as this would have modelled co-operation, openness and transparency. I should have been more aware and taken responsibility and planned for the significance of gender on the dynamic process within the group. On further reflection, I believe this would have had analytical value, (although our failure to acknowledge this has equal analytical value), and been experienced as empowering to co-inquirers because we could have shed power, shared skills by recognising further the power imbalance in operation in the group, in the research material and in turn in the organisation. (Jones: 1995).

A year into the co-operative inquiry, I found myself regularly reflecting on my work identity and how this was influencing the group, its processes and the group's direction. I can now identify that all my previous management experience influenced the implementation of the research methodology and findings. I have an important, healthy and committed relationship with my work. This means my work identity is an important feature of my overall identity. Within my employing organisation I have constructed my role within my department to model the organisation's wider values and aims and objectives. This provides me with, what Harris (2008) describes as '*role clarity'* and a solid confident foundation to make decisions, represent the organisation, maximise autonomy and empower staff.

A further consequence of role clarity is that I should have developed a good balance between authority and power which is derived from my position within the organisation, my experience, internal knowledge, strength of personality and my interpersonal relationships. However, on closer analysis, my role in the co-operative inquiry highlighted I still have much to learn about the use of power.

6.2 Still Blind

During every co-operative meeting, I experienced feelings of confidence and elation that the inquiry was making a difference although in those very same meetings I also experienced feelings of anxiety, anger, fear and sadness because I felt the inquiry was having no impact. I was on occasion defensive. I was absorbing these feelings from different members of the group. Holmes and Perrin (1991: 264) describe three categories of countertransference. My experience corresponds to the first category. *'I had feelings responses; anger, envy, powerlessness and being flooded*', all reacting to my own internal defenses. I was left with what Winnicott (1998) termed objective countertransference meaning my ability to hold their terror was limited. On reflection, I realised I lacked the space to unpick the emotional experience and be receptive to the group's projections. This also impacted on my ability to empathise in the group through 'vicarious introspection' which I now realise was a missed opportunity for empathy. Because I failed to identify the countertransference I remained blind to some analytical insights. (Holmes and Perrin: 1997: 5).

Conclusion

This chapter has studied the process and experience of the co-operative inquiry. There were four powerful influences on the group; power; particularly the degree to which the group expected differences in the levels of power operating in the group. On occasion as a group we unconsciously avoided uncertainty by focusing on the development of data systems allowing us not to think about more hidden topics. The nature of co-operative inquiry meant that co-inquirers needed to achieve a balance between individualism versus collectivism. On occasion the inquirers would work together converging on particular topics such as the case studies whilst on other occasions inquirers were asked to diverge and work individually in special areas of interest. However the most palpable influence was that of masculinity and femininity. We were an equal number of men and women and yet we did not account for the power of traditional male and female constructions and relations. This influenced the method and limited the potential of the research.

The co-operative inquiry became a relatively safe space allowing us to explore change and think about ourselves although it was not safe enough to explore some parts of who we are. We were able to think about how we had changed and what we had learnt. We could ask what difference had our activity made in practice? We had integrated theory into our actions and practice but we continued to enact certain traditionally, socially constructed behaviours.

In the next Chapter I explore how these discourses and themes influenced, shaped and limited the inquiry and what was learnt.

Chapter 7: The Co-operative Inquiry makes Conclusions

Introduction

In this Chapter I aim to critically analyse how the inquiry concluded to support others who may be thinking of implementing a similar methodology. I have continued to use Heron's (1996: 102) guide of; what he would find of great interest in a report on a co-operative inquiry. I remind the reader to refer back to Chapter 3 to refresh themselves about the methodology especially the analytical framework. I explore the data and the emergent development of theories, the outputs, outcomes and findings of the inquiry. I study the group, and my own behaviour within the group, and make interpretations concerning the dynamics and processes that occurred in the group. I then relate this back to life in the organisation and the inclusion of fathers. I include a sample of co-inquirers' stories and a variety of diagrams and illustrations to facilitate comprehension. My aim in this Chapter is to provide the reader with evidence of clarity of thought and analysis and evidence of the coherence in the application of the method. I include the findings from the case-study analysis; A good practice guide to include fathers in social worker.

The penultimate meeting was held on the 9th September 2011. During this meeting, the co-inquirers reflected over the original aims and tasks of the project, how to sustain the achievements and what work needed to continue. The last meeting was held on the 27th October 2011 with co-inquirers being asked to reflect over their experience of the research process, the research journey and any final reflections on the future of the work. To aid reflection co-inquirers reviewed the aims and goals of the project and spent thirty minutes completing a small questionnaire. Table 7.1 illustrates what we found. The findings indicate that the majority forms of knowing were experiential and propositional. The themes were confirmed in the last two co-operative inquiry meetings. Two supplementary reflective meetings were held to analyse and triangulate the findings from the co-operative inquiry with the findings from the post case file audit, feedback from external analytical forums and the write up of the thesis. This is detailed in part 2 of Chapter 3. I use these identified findings as headings and sub-headings in this analysis.

In summary the research concluded that:

- Organisations need to encourage a cultural of change where it is safe to talk about father inclusion
- Keep focused on basic practice
- When engaging fathers the work must always be located within an obligation to confront entrenched power relations and recognition that fathers are situated within a complex network of relationships of power with other men, women, and children and within wider society.
- When engaging fathers the conscious and unconscious hierarchical power relations and dominant organisational culture must be regularly reflected upon.
- When engaging fathers we need to attempt to upset and to think differently about traditional power relations.
- A 27% increase in fathers recorded on case file information
- Social workers felt safer and more confident to identify and include the father
- Social workers reported they were more aware of different ways to communicate with men Social workers identified areas of vulnerability and need in men.
- OFSTED Inspection supported the research findings

Table 7.1 Thematic Patterns and Findings when Attempting to Include Fathers

	Themes identified by co-inquirers during reflective meetings	Themes identified using Heron's Framework of Knowing	Discourses identified by co-inquirers from the transcripts	Discourses identified through triangulation and supervisory analysis
1	Fear = Blindness (Experiential knowing)	Anxiety = Blindness (Experiential knowing)	Safety (Propositional knowing)	Containment (Practical knowing)
2	Blindness & Organisational sub-cultures (Experiential knowing)	Keep focused on practice A good practice guide (Presentational / Propositional knowing)	A learning organisation (Presentational / Propositional knowing)	More men are assessed and included (Presentational / Propositional knowing)
3	Passivity (Experiential knowing)	Silencing & Blindness (Experiential knowing)	Power (Experiential knowing)	The circle of interlocking oppression (Presentational / Propositional knowing)
4	The Group (Experiential knowing)	Dominant organisational culture (Presentational / Propositional knowing)	Dominant constructions: Gender (Presentational / Propositional knowing)	Unconscious re-enactment of male domination: Silence & Blindness continue (Presentational / Propositional knowing)
5	Paternal Alienation (Presentational / Propositional knowing)	Triangulation and a need for reparation (Experiential knowing)	Triangulation, social work and fathers (Presentational / Propositional knowing)	The personal, the professional and the management of self (Experiential knowing)
6.	A Female Leader (Experiential knowing)	Leading the Inquiry (Presentational / Propositional knowing)	Barriers (Presentational / Propositional knowing)	Replicating the Research (Practical knowing)

1. Fear to Containment; a story of Competing Anxieties

CI: 5 '*We know many of the barriers that prevent the involvement of fathers especially the unspoken fear of many social workers and managers in working with men*'.

CI3: '*We've interviewed a lot of men in my team, the safety planning is working and we assess the risk he possesses. If he's dangerous we'll see him in the office. There is systemic change in my team*'.

1.2 Anxiety Leads to Blindness

The co-operative inquiry discovered that the threat of sexual attack is a very common and yet unspoken fear present in the minds of female social workers. This powerful feeling has contributed to the complex reasons why social workers, managers and organisations need to defend against this fear by becoming 'blind' to father involvement. Senior managers, local safeguarding children's boards, Children's Social Care departments, universities and central governmental departments, universities and even OFSTED have, until recently, been complicit colluding in this silence remaining blind to the inclusion of fathers and abusers.

The fear of sexual attack is extremely powerful and overwhelming. I hypotheses that this fear overshadows all other fears in social work most notably the daily endemic anxiety of child protection work i.e. social workers hold the daily anxiety of being held account for the death of a child. This means in cases where the male presents as a risk (or resource) to the child, those risks will remain unassessed and 'unchecked' because social workers are too afraid to assess fathers. This evidence significantly contributes to our understanding as to why fathers have been continually excluded from the social work task. Thinking from a social constructionist perspective; over time fathers have been constructed out of social work except for those fathers who have been constructed as dangerous and are then further constructed out of social work.

1.3 And 1.4 Safety and Containment

Once we became aware of this blindness, co-inquirers worked together spending the first 6 months of the project implementing a new safety planning system. The safety planning system was designed to appease workers' fears by firstly naming their fears, and then assessing and deconstructing their fear and the risk presented.

2. From Blindness to Sight; More Men Assessed and Included

CI15: '*In terms of social work competencies we* [child protection co-ordinators] *certainly feel it's a priority when assessments are presented to conference now much more than they used to be, information is there about the father.*

Indeed there certainly feels there's been a cultural shift'. Workers are less defensive, as are we, in including men.' *So yes there's been a lot of change but whether that's sustainable I'm not sure we'll need to keep pushing the agenda I think for years to come*.

CI16: '*Well there's been change to practice and I feel I have been part of that change, we are seeing an increase in men included in assessments especially risk assessments, working with those non-residential fathers and we're now providing them much needed services to address their abuse so that is an impressive change but there's more work to do because we'll always be inundated by poor examples of fathers and men so that stereotype will never shift'*.

2.1 Blindness and Organisational Sub-Culture

In challenging individual, professional and organisational blindness the co-operative inquiry had to remodel an organisational 'sub'-culture. I first 'felt' an organisational shift directly after the practitioners' conference in early 2011. (It was at this point, I became interested in organisational culture).

By June 2011, other co-inquirers started to describe a change in an aspect of the culture in the organisation as there was now a quantitative trend to include fathers. Cultural change became a subject of discussion and reflection. Through further reading and analysis, I was able to connect the sub-cultural shift to 'emergence, sustainability and interconnectivity' associated with systemic thinking which I review in Chapter 9.

We connected a shift in a sub-cultural within the organisation, to the now daily conversations co-inquirers, and others, were having about the problems and fears of involving fathers. These many conversations encouraged openness, challenged the '*blindness'* in the organisation to father inclusion, led to what Fullan (2002: 231) describes as the development of '*a knowledge society*' and contributed to the conditions for fathers inclusion. The co-inquiry became a space for collaborative conceptual thought which, I now recognise, had an energising effect on co-inquirers who became full of hope, energy and motivation. By June 2011, the co-inquiry had a moral purpose; inquirers had insight into the process of change, the aptitude to progress relationships and were able to make sense of new knowledge. Fullan (2002: 236) calls this the; '*Cultural Change Principal*'.

Following the completion of the co-operative inquiry, the drive towards greater father inclusive practice was planned to continue through other supportive initiatives and systemic and procedural changes as the sub-cultural shift was in its infancy. In the questionnaire completed by co-inquirers; one co-inquirer stated that the group had discovered that '*a culture can be changed*' and two others referred to; '*feeling like the culture has shifted*'. (See the later pages of Appendix 2).

How do you measure whether we have created the conditions for father inclusive practice? The reality is that further strategies, methods and techniques are needed, beyond the life of the project, to sustain the co-inquiry's progress. The inquiry developed social work and organisational systems. However, that has only been the first stage of the work. The second stage is in further social work development, (for example; work with couples), and in the need to develop a methodology for how Children's Social Care works with perpetrators of domestic violence and other abuse. In itself, this will keep fathers on the organisational agenda.

In January 2014 I telephoned three co-inquirers and asked them whether father inclusion was still an important strategy and practice within the organisation.

C15 commented that*: 'the systems are still in place. The referral team are still asking the questions about fathers and the ICS changes mean we still have the fathers' details. It is also still part of the training curriculum. I think one of the problems is that the organisational memory has suffered because we have had quite a turnover of staff especially in the children in need teams and I am not sure they have all been trained*.

CI 10 reflected that: '*It is still a priority at conferences and FGCs and it is still a strategic aim especially in Early Help but we've lost the funding for the domestic violence specialist social worker and the fathers' worker which has taken much of the momentum away from the agenda*'.

CI 13: reported: '*We are not talking about it like we were before. The main reason for this is that the group has stopped meeting so there is no group driving forward the conversations we were having. Despite this the training plan, the systems and the remaining staff mean that we continue to include fathers in our work' It is still a KPI.*

2.2 Keep Focused on Practice

Half way through the research co-inquirers reflected on the influence of the project upon their practice:

CI6: '*There was always this gap in our assessments; we didn't assess the perpetrator and this has always worried me as a practitioner so to come here and meet likeminded people asking the same questions and finding a solution, no matter how complex has been rewarding'*.

CI8: 'As a newly qualified worker it has been very helpful. I feel a lot more skilled because of this group although it's been daunting too with so many managers here and it took me time to feel confident to speak'.

CI11: It's been impressive that there is a forum to talk about the changes we're trying to make. I've never experienced this in other boroughs. I am just grateful that I can feed into the process, learn from others and meet likeminded professionals. It's also great for networking.

CI3: 'Its also been a powerful yet helpful experience being a dad myself'

CI11: 'As an outsider it is interesting to see that you have attended to a project that is voluntary, a voluntary subject too. That's impressive as has been the good attendance which has demonstrated commitment. My criticism is that we did not integrate the domestic violence agenda, commissioning and strategy or some of the wider processes external to the group. I think we could have achieved more in terms of a more experimental approach in working with domestic violence if we'd done this'.

CI5: 'We're identifying fathers in the team but we've got no service that will address their behaviours'.

CI8: 'He admits he's got problems and those problems have led him to hit his children'.

(22nd June 2011 p19 of the co-operative inquiry meeting transcripts)

Towards the end of the research co-inquirers were asked again to reflect on their practice. They reported:

CI4: 'If you think we get 2000 approximate referrals a year [meaning about 8000 approximate contacts a year] and 80% of those referrals have male violence then there's a massive unmet need out there so the violence will just continue if we don't up-skill our social workers and provide services for the abusers'.

CI14: 'We do need to think differently and that is what this group is doing, we're working with the reality of many adult relationships and that domestic violence seems to be at epidemic proportions'.

CI12: 'It is the next bit isn't it; once you've engaged them what do you do then'?

CI18: 'It's another barrier for workers; you don't engage them because there are no services because if you do locate them you know you can't help them address their issues even if they wanted to'.

CI9: Personally this group and the research itself has given me a new perspective on my parents I see my father in a different way especially his vulnerability. 14th September 2011 p 19 – 20 of the co-operative inquiry transcripts).

Initially the group was directive, (January 2010 – April 2010), becoming increasingly enabling and facilitative as the resources and skills of the co-inquirers were of the primary importance, (April 2010 – May 2011), and then towards the end of its life mutual and group orientated, (June 2011 – October 2011). This happened because the co-inquirers came to understand that the success of the project was dependent on we implemented the methodology and the health and functioning of the group. As indicated by the above quotes the co-inquirers were change agents, the co-operative inquiry was a learning environment and they were the primary resource to facilitate change both in the group and in the external environment. This encouraged interdependence as did our shared vision of the inquiry which had created a powerful dynamic. I postulated that this accounted for the very good attendance, high levels of motivation and 'work group mentality' all allowing the group to become an 'instrument of achievement'. (Douglas: 2000).

There was an overwhelming desire by the group to focus on 'front line' practice as indicated by the above quotes. We went about achieving this by converging every third inquiry meeting. Individual co-inquirers collected examples of cases where the father had been included. (See below). Over the eighteen month inquiry we spent four co-operative inquiry meetings analysing a total of fifty seven cases where fathers had been successfully included in assessments and interventions. Co-inquirers would present a case each and we would then reflect together on the process of involvement. We would identify the techniques, methods, approaches and attitudes employed by the social workers to include fathers.

Analysing the transcripts from the co-inquiries and the semi-structured interviews co-inquirers concluded in the last two reflective meetings that:

- Social Work Practice in the Service had improved.
- Co-inquirers reported that there was awareness amongst some social workers and acceptance and or a realisation in others that there is a need and expectation that fathers needed to be assessed.
- This was further confirmed by triangulating additional data in two supernumerary reflective meetings where we reflected on and categorised data from the pre and post-case file audit and ICS which evidenced that social workers felt safer and more confident to identify and include the father because; '*there is a healthier respect and discussion about fear and how fear can be managed'*.
- Social worker practice is evolving in terms of working with fathers in Children's Social Care. To involve fathers' social workers needed an assessment framework, like the Barnardos Risk Assessment Matrix and the CAADA DASH to assess perpetrators of abuse.
- Social workers reported they were more aware of different ways to communicate with men subsequently social workers were identifying areas of vulnerability and need in men. (Although, this does not avoid the reality that men must be held to account for their abuse).

- , is the existence of '*a spectrum of need in terms of fathers, their adult relationships and their parenting capacity*' that traditional perpetrator programmes do not meet. Indeed, this has led the largest provider of perpetrator programmes in the UK to redesign their programme to include parental capacity.

This change in practice then led to an organisational debate over whether the current perpetrator programme used in the borough was fit for purpose. Members of the co-inquiry then led an organisational conversation over the need to adapt perpetrator programmes to a modular format and to include a parenting capacity module.

Below are five vignettes which illustrate a few of the 57 cases that were discussed within the co-operative inquiry and informed the good practice guide to engaging fathers which can be located below:

1. *Three children (aged 9, 5 and 2) from two different fathers, not previously known to services, entered the care system due to the mother's psychosis brought about it was thought, by her heroin addiction. Her prognosis was poor and a parallel search began for alternative carers in the maternal and paternal extended families as well as possible adopters. Initially the social worker only contacted the maternal extended family and had referred the case to the adoption and permanency team.* (There was a risk in this care plan of splitting up the siblings). *The deputy manager and co-operative inquirer brought the case to the group for discussion. The group identified the need to search for the fathers via immigration, police and benefit data as well as contacting the GP and family friends. We also recommended the case be referred for an FGC. Four months later all three children were placed with one of the fathers.*

2. *The mother had suffered eight years of domestic violence but she was unable to separate. The mother was unable to see how the violence was affecting her two sons (aged 8 and 10) developmental progress. They were both withdrawn at school, emotionally unpredictable and erratic and aggressive with peers. Social care had completed five assessments following each incident reported to police but this had made no real difference. The non-resident father had never been engaged. The case was brought to the group following the most recent incident, where the father had been arrested after assaulting a police officer following a further domestic violence incident, which meant the children were placed on a child protection plan. The group reviewed the case and recommended the need for a chronology, a Barnardo's risk assessment and a referral to MARAC. However, what was most important was that*

we applied the safety planning process and developed a plan to engage the father. We agreed to invite him into the office and discuss his relationship with his children. We telephoned him and followed this up with a letter. We also involved his probation officer and the criminal court by contributing to his pre-sentence report. In essence we forced the father to meet with us. He met with a male and female social worker (with security nearby). He spoke of his own abuse at the hands of his father, his frustrations and his drinking. He signed a contract and we arranged for him to see his children at a family friend's home. We completed an assessment and identified that he presented as a significant risk and should a further incident occur then the Local Authority needed to take the matter to court. When the next domestic violence incident happened the case immediately went to court, the mother agreed to move out of London and to permanently separate. Eight months on the mother remained separated and contact had stopped.

3. *Both parents had serious drug difficulties and were unable to care for their new born baby. Initially no extended family could be identified. The case was brought to the group where we identified that it may be possible to track the paternal extended family via a contact in the local mosque. The social worker was able to identify a paternal uncle. This led to an FGC and a plan was made by the paternal family to adopt the child which happened 6 months later.*

4. *A father used physical chastisement as the only form of managing his two daughters. Subsequently this had resulted in him injuring one of his children and their followed a child protection investigation. The initial social work plan had been to support the mother to separate from the father. However the case was brought to the group by a colleague of the social worker and we identified the need to engage and assess the father. He agreed to move out of the family home and attend a Caring Dads course where he learnt alternative parenting techniques. He also attended a men's' group to reflect on his aggression. Five months later he returned to the home and the care of his children and there were no further incidents identified.*

5. *A mother was convicted for Class A drug importation and sentence to twenty years imprisonment. Her two children entered the care system as she refused to identify any family members. The group identified the*

need to undertake direct work with the children as well as other investigative checks to see whether family could be found. This led to the social worker locating the children's father in America. An assessment was completed and the children were relocated to the States.

By analysing 57 cases like these the co-inquirers developed:

A Good Practice Guide to Engage Fathers:

Developments in Social Work Practice; a good practice guide to the inclusion of fathers

Many research activities devote much attention to causality but little time and space is given to the practical application of new practice to redress the identified problems. I approached this research differently as I wanted to support social workers develop their practice. This section is a 'good practice guide' as to the strategies, methods and techniques which promote inclusive practice for men. This guide was developed from the literature on father engagement identified in the literature review and through the measured activities of practitioners and managers through the co-operative inquiry and from an analysis of techniques in engagement from 57 case studies where fathers had been included.

1. All practitioners should adopt the following principles of good practice with fathers

- The self-perception of manliness and fatherhood are deeply rooted and interrelated. In all cultures, being a man is constructed with longstanding and powerful meaning and these meanings vary across cultures, ethnicities and class. As a practitioner you need to understand masculinity and contemporary fatherhood if you are to accurately assess fathers and family dynamics.
- Social workers must be aware of the insidious and endemic nature of power and gender relations and how this affects their practice and how it impacts on children and vulnerable women, and other marginalised groups.
- Social workers should be prepared to work with men and support them be better parents by assisting them with their parenting skills or supporting them address addictions, illness or violence.
- Practitioners should recognise the value of fathers to children
- Practitioners should commit to the empowerment of marginalised fathers, (in terms of them becoming better partners and parents).

- Be aware of your own assumptions, prejudices and personal biography that may influence your view of fathers. (Consider how your experience of your own father / partner influences your practice).

- Be empathetic to fathers. This is not easy when working with abusers but remember he is far more threatened than you.

- Be respectful. Respect has a particular relevance for men. This is evident through popular culture about respect and disrespect in the masculine worlds for example; in sport and music. If social workers communicate respect throughout their interventions then they are more likely to engage the father and keep him involved in their intervention.

- Consistency; Practitioners need to be consistent in what they say, in the information they provide and in their authenticity and in the way they treat fathers.

- Value and understand the importance of fathers to case planning and involve them, (where safe), in every aspect of case management from assessment to closure.

- Be prepared to understand the issues that uniquely effect fathers. For example: non-residential, Black, ethnic minority and white working class fathers all have unique circumstances and pressures that need to be understood and assessed.

- Practitioners must commit to involving the father and the paternal extended family from the earliest possible opportunity in the assessment.

- Family Group Conferences need to be used as early as possible within the assessment stage.

- Practitioners need to be flexible and willing to engaging violent / abusive men.

- Practitioners need to know the law in relation to fathers and paternal responsibility.

- Social workers should be expected to demonstrate 'due diligence' in their efforts to locate the father and this should become a practice expectation.

- Fathers are expected to be on time and therefore so should social workers.

- Do not minimise domestic violence.

- Recognise that many fathers are vulnerable and will either withdraw or be threatening as a form of defence. Remember, fathers may be abusive but research indicates that 90% of children regularly see their fathers, (following separation), and most children want to maintain a relationship with their fathers, even if they are abusive. In referred cases it is likely that the child is having contact with the father, (if non-resident).

- Always investigate the father's involvement in cases of child maltreatment.

(Ashley et al: 2011 & Hahn et al: 2011, Asmussen & Weizel: 2010 and Fatherhood Institute: 2009)

2. Techniques to Identify & Include Fathers

- We must exhaust all options to locate fathers. Be curious, creative and persistent; make time to investigate (even if there are multiple fathers as any of them could be a risk and resource).
- Contact the GP, (research indicates that if men have a problem they are most likely to tell their GP, research also indicates men use the same GPs as their partners and rarely change their GP).
- Use Facebook.
- Speak to the professional network surrounding the child. Does the school, children centre, health visitor, mid wife, maternity unit, local community police officer, hospital know the father's name?
- Ask the maternal and paternal extended families.
- Locate a copy of the birth certificate.
- Undertake local authority and police checks.
- Undertake Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and Inland Revenue checks.
- Contact the Child Support Agency.
- Contact the Child Maintenance Information Commission who oversees the CSA.
- Contact the local Authority Community Charge Team.
- Complete a local authority search.
- Ensure accurate information is requested and recorded on the case files, (i.e. the correct telephone numbers and addresses for the father and paternal extended family).
- Mothers will often 'gate-keep' the father's identity. (Research evidences this occurs in 66% of all cases). Do not give up. Ask at every meeting and challenge her non-compliance and explain the benefits of contact with the father. US research suggests that social workers should recruit fathers through mothers, to focus on a strengths-based empowerment model of intervention that includes a range of parental support

programmes. (Featherstone et al: 2010, Hahn et al: 2009).

- Always identify whether a man is living (or visiting) the family home. Check the basics, are there a man's clothes in the home etc.

(Hahn et al: 2011, Fatherhood Institute: 2009 & Rosenberg & Wilcox: 2006)

- intervention. (Ahley: et al: 2011).

3. How to Engage Fathers

- Address fathers by name. Correspondence needs to be sent to the father and mother separately and needs to be addressed directly to the parent using their name (not simply saying Dear Parent but Mr Smith or Mr Johnson), as research evidences men respond to individual attention.

- Engage him as early as possible in the social work intervention.

- Assess his role, how he views the maltreatment, his role, his opinion and what he could have done to prevent the maltreatment, his role models, his views of discipline, his aggression and anger and his controlling or manipulative behaviour. Also the relationship between the father and mother and any involvement from other men in the children's and mother's life need to be included as part of the assessment.

- Be prepared to build a relationship based on trust.

- Use a strengths based approach; men respond well to praise.

- Managing the complications of parental conflict, especially financial related conflicts can be extremely problematic for practitioners and will often prevent mothers and fathers from working together in the interests of children. (If the non-residential father is involved in the child's life he is more likely to contribute financially).

- Always visit prison when fathers are incarcerated.

- Give parental tips to fathers.

- Where it is safe for the woman, interview parents together, (although giving both parents the opportunity to be seen alone during the intervention).

- Discuss the emotional needs of the child.

- Discuss discipline and boundaries: every father needs to understand and learn strategies for managing his child's behaviour and managing the father's anger. The social worker's role is to offer the father guidance on discipline as well as assist him understand the roots of his anger and establish an agreement over what is acceptable discipline. i.e. the salient themes to a positive strategy for discipline and boundaries

are:

- Adopt a high praise, high warmth and low criticism parenting style.
- Establish clear rules and administer them consistently.
- Do not acquiesce to a tantrum.
- Refrain from using anger when setting or administering boundaries.
- Do not complicate or mistake bad behaviour with a bad child.
- Use time outs.
- Coalesce rules, boundaries and limit setting with explanations.

- Social workers need to be able to adapt their practice to different types of fathers in different situations.

- In terms of working with fathers from Black and ethnic minority cultures then social workers must be culturally curious and talk with the father about what it means to be a father from his cultural perspective. What is the father's role, what are his responsibilities, what additional stressors exist (i.e. racism, poverty and marginalisation), how would he define fatherhood from his specific perspective?

- Practitioners need to consider how they will adapt their practice, as they need a variety of engagement formats so they can engage with; married fathers, co-habiting fathers, young fathers, non-residential fathers, imprisoned fathers, no recourse to public funds fathers or fathers with no immigration status, multiple fathers, boyfriends and step-fathers.

- Fathers need to be clear about expectations, roles and communication between the social worker and him.

- Other basic practice initiatives include:
- Be honest.
- Be flexible in terms of home visit times.
- Provide the father with observations and feedback particularly positives and areas of development.
- Develop the quality of the working relationship with the father.
- Provide fathers with an opportunity to tell their story.
- Understand masculinity to enhance your practice for example; many men like technology and to communicate by email or texting additionally men respond well to structure i.e. a clear CIN or CP plan.
- The father needs to know, (if he is worried for the welfare of his children), that the social worker can be an ally to monitor the welfare of the children.
- Likewise; be honest with the mother about the father's involvement in the social work intervention. (Ahley: et al: 2011).

4. Engaging Non-Residential Fathers

- ❖ Take into account when the father lives and the distance he has to travel when inviting him to meetings or child protection conferences.

- ❖ Remember 50% of fathers who are in contact with Children Social Care are non-residential and a further 50% are in employment. Work is crucial to masculine identity and so this needs to be respected. Social workers need to schedule around fathers' work commitments.

- ❖ Often non-residential fathers will have other children. It is important to be aware of how practically, emotionally and financially difficult it is to manage more than one family and when we consider triangulation it is inevitable that one of the families will suffer.

- ❖ When assessing non-residential fathers consider:

  - ➢ Assess the type of relationship the child has with the non-residential father.
  - ➢ His current living and contact arrangements.
  - ➢ Assess how the non-residential father fits within the family system (because he has an important impact on the family dynamics).
  - ➢ Assess and understand the role the non-residential father plays in contributing to the maltreatment of the child or in helping to protect the child, (he may offer a suitable placement and offset the maltreatment).
  - ➢ Is there another man living in the house?

(Ashley et al: 2011, Rosenberg & Wilcox: 2006)

5. Engaging Perpetrators or abusers

- ❖ Ensure there is a safety plan for the child, mother and social worker before engaging the abuser.

- ❖ Assessments need to deconstruct the risks, causes and complications surrounding the violence and must pay attention to the stressors in the family. (See the Barnardos Risk Assessment Matrix or CAADA). This will include;

- ➢ Past / recent physical violence, past use of weapons against women / partners, use of firearms, sexual violence, threats of murder, extreme jealousy and controlling behaviours. (Blacklock: 2011).
- ➢ The assessment must include how the violence impacts on all those involved.
- ➢ Name violence to women as unacceptable and must stop.
- ➢ Provide individual and group interventions which pay attention to parenting.
- ➢ Respect men who want to change.
- ➢ Fathers need to be informed of the impact of their violence on their child's development.
- ➢ Fathers should be involved in the child protection process. (They should be offered an

appointment to meet with the chair of the conference before and after the conference).

- Social workers need to recognise the difficulties and barriers to survivors of domestic violence accessing services and plan responses accordingly.

- Fathers' abuse of their children must be addressed. Be honest about the problem and identify actions that need to be taken to prevent further maltreatment. Abusive parents must acknowledge their abuse. They must then apologise to their child as this benefits children's recovery. (Rosenberg & Wilcox: 2006)

- Social workers should be supported, (through supervision, rigorous local authority procedures, training and safety planning), so they are not disempowered by violent men. Social workers need to be supported to engage despite the complexities of the power and gender relationships which must be taken into account by employing organisations.

- Abusive men can be controlling and manipulative and so they will often display these behaviours through as a sense of entitlement and narcissism. Confronting these behaviours must be the priority of any social work intervention.

- '*Maltreating fathers typically do not seek intervention voluntarily, nor are they intrinsically motivated to change their parenting style'*. In response, social workers need a clear framework and tight boundaries to guide their interventions to engage abusers. (Scott & Crooks: 2004, p 101). These boundaries may include:

  - Application of a risk assessment (CAADA or Barnardos Risk Assessment Matrix).
  - Joint work with the Criminal Courts and Probation Services; (in terms of injunctions, community orders, IDAP and Caring Dads).
  - Joint work with the family courts, (in private proceedings), in relation to s.7 reports, injunctions, contact orders and Prohibitive Steps Orders.
  - Application of the MARAC and MAPPA processes.
  - Joint works with the voluntary sector to support survivors escape the violence and maintain separation.
  - Joint work with the Police's Community Safety team and the Child Abuse Investigation Teams in the identification and protection of survivors and in the arrest and conviction of abusers.
  - Application of the Child in Need process.
  - Application of Child Protection Procedures and a Child Protection Plan.
  - Application of the Public Law Outline (PLO).
  - Application of s.31 Care Proceedings.

6. *Training needs of Social Workers*

Social workers need the following training in relation to working with fathers:

1. Exploring local, national and international research (see Chapters).
2. Identifying fathers, obstacles to engaging fathers who are deemed a risk – engaging with reluctance and the reasons for it, talking with fathers about risk, dealing with denial and developing a dialogue about their violence: (there also needs to be a segment on masculinity i.e. understanding masculinity and male behaviours).
3. Assessing and managing his risk.
4. Case analysis; group exploration of a case and taking stock.
5. I would also suggest a session on social workers own assumptions and prejudices in working with men (including personal and organisational defences). Additionally what can social workers expect from supervision in working with men?
6. Domestic violence; particularly working with perpetrators and the training in the Barnardos Risk Assessment Matrix and CAADA.
7. Social workers need to be confident to be able to work with the couple relationships if parents remain together. Where there is separation and conflict, (for example in the process of a s.7 report), social workers need the skills to work with both parents. They need to be given the techniques to navigate the often conflictual adults' relationships to remain focused on the child. Couple work can illicit very daunting and powerful feelings in the social worker leaving them lacking in confidence to work with 'warring' parents. Therefore; training in family therapy techniques would clearly benefit social workers and managers.

(Hahn et al: 2011, Asmussen & Weizel: 2010, Fatherhood Institute: 2010)

7. A Practice Guide for Managers in How to Include Fathers

- Adopt and implement the seven aims to include fathers.
- Adopt and commit to a paternal pledge. (See Appendix 5).
- Challenge the silence and lead discussions in your organisations about how to work with abusive men.
- Commit strategically and long term to the engagement of fathers in terms of partnering and parenting.
- Value and understand the importance of fathers to the service provision process.
- Involve the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and include it in their strategic long term plans.
- Regularly audit to ensure fathers involvement is improving.
- Regularly and repeatedly ask social workers about fathers as this will encourage staff and they are aware of what is expected of them.
- Managers need to enforce, (through job descriptions, person specifications and

appraisal targets), that social workers are expected to demonstrate 'due diligence' in their efforts to locate the father. This should become a practice expectation.

- Fathers, (like most of us), want continuity and consistency. Fathers do not want changes in their child's allocated social workers and they do not want students.

- Do not minimise the impact of the work on social workers who need to feel empowered and confident to work with men. To achieve this they must feel safe, (physically and emotionally), and be given the meaningful supervision and the necessary skills and practical supports to include fathers.

- The organisation, facilitation and management of contact needs to be improved through discussion in social work team meetings and possibly additional training.

- Managers need to initiate and institutionalise Safety Planning throughout their social work structure.

- Managers need to provide containing, safe and sophisticated supervision to enable practitioners to disclose their feelings and fears and how this impacts on their ability to engage fathers.

- Managers need to implement a criteria to exclude fathers which will include cases where the father is: An untreated, convicted sex offender, a perpetrator of intense domestic violence, (Barnardos Matrix 4), an unwillingness to participate in treatment for domestic violence, in violation of a no-contact order with the mother or child, and or unwilling to participate in services to the extent that the social worker articulates concerns that the father's involvement endangers the child.

- The expectation would then be that social workers evidence how the father achieves this criterion in their assessment. All men that do not achieve this criterion are included in social work assessments. (Hahn et al: 2011 & Smithgall et al: 2009).

- Managers need to receive similar trainings but also:

1. Implementing the safety planning procedure.
2. Improve services to survivors and perpetrators of domestic violence.
3. Supervision specifically to identify; projection, transference and countertransference and how these operate when working with fathers.
4. To identify and discuss how social workers own history may impact on how they work with men.
5. Personal and organisational defences.
6. I would also suggest that all managers be trained in providing a psychodynamic based supervision.
7. Train staff in diligent searches.

(Hahn et al: 2011, Featherstone et al: 2010 & Smithgall et al: 2009, Asmussen & Weizel: 2010, Fatherhood Institute: 2010)

8. *Engaging Fathers: the Manager's Role*

- An 8 point plan has been suggested for managers to adopt in relation to the engagement of fathers by social care:

1. Make fathers visible.
2. Joint advocacy for mothers and fathers (as one sided advocacy will only increase polarisation.
3. Address health and safety of workers especially in relation to violence.
4. Involve fathers early.
5. Accept that fathers can have a positive role in the lives of children.
6. Always consider paternal as well as maternal extended family (via an FGC).
7. Develop specific strategies and interventions for young fathers.
8. Focus on the basics; accurate record keeping developing performance related information.

- Managers need to provide social workers with the skills and resources to find family members and there needs to be greater use of DNA testing.

9. *Engaging Perpetrators and Abusers; The Manager's role*

An 8 point plan has been suggested for managers to adopt in relation to the engagement of fathers by social care:

1. Name violence to women as unacceptable and must stop.

2. Commit strategically and operationally (long-term) to confronting domestic violence by committing resources to survivors and perpetrators, (especially to develop local, modular, perpetrator programmes that recognise perpetrators are fathers).

3. Ensure there is a safety plan for the child, mother and social worker before engaging the abuser.

4. Adopt a risk assessment framework for social workers and train them. For example the Barnardos Risk Assessment Matrix or the CAADA risk assessment model. (From an international perspective: The Massachusetts Department of Social Services Domestic Violence Unit produces an excellent and thorough risk assessment model entitled: Accountability and Connection with Abusive Men. A new child protection response to increasing family safety). (2004).

5. Agencies need to develop a joint working protocol over how they are going to address domestic violence and the safeguarding of children.

6. Managers need to recognise the difficulties and barriers to survivors of domestic violence accessing services and plan responses accordingly.

7. Managers need to initiate the Safety Planning Guidance.

8. Managers need to recognise that working with abusers is difficult, complex and emotive and social workers need support and training to accomplish this successfully. (Featherstone et al: 2010)

10. From a National Perspective

- I can't help myself but appeal to; Government Departments, Health Services, Local Authorities and Police all of whom need to collectively recognise the dangers and impact of domestic violence on our children and our society and then collectively develop and implement long-term strategies to reduce the incidents of domestic violence.
- Local Authorities need to lobby central government to establish a parent locator service and develop domestic violence courts.
- All undergraduate and postgraduate social work courses should include training in working with fathers and in combating the impact of domestic violence on children and families.
- In terms of Social Work education I can't help but plead with any academic reading this thesis; please include a series of lectures on working with men and domestic violence. We will only stop the abuse if we engage the abuser.

In conclusion this guide has been produced by practitioners for practitioners; it combines best practice initiatives from across the Western world of social work and applied by a group of committed social workers within the complex milieu of child protection social work in London. We found that it works. We now offer you an opportunity; to implement these suggestions in your local authority children and family department. Good luck.

2.3 A Learning Organisation

CI5: '*It's been an experience. I now recognise that I think about my father every time I meet a father and I compare him to my dad, who was a great dad. Of course they never measure up*'.

The co-operative inquiry offered its members a forum to learn and transfer learning to colleagues. The focus on learning has been a significant feature of the inquiry. One co-inquirer wrote:

CI9: '*I know how to identify and engage men especially violent ones and I feel more confident in protecting children and families'* another said*; 'I am more thoughtful about the needs of families; of men, women and children now*'.

All agreed they had learnt new skills in practice especially in work with men, group work and reflection.

The co-operative inquiry group was in itself a learning organisation as defined by Peter Senge (1990). The primary function of the co-operative inquiry, (and the most challenging), was to turn theoretical learning to actual practice, based on applied theory across and up and down the system. The aim was to transform practice through people and teams; through generative learning and cultural change. (Fullan: 2002).

We had learnt together which had reinforced our shared vision whilst giving us the necessary resources to implement the methodology. On reflection, we were able to facilitate transformation by continually focusing on the processes of learning and the quality of interaction in the group.

Chapter 4 and Appendix 2 demonstrates how the learning has, and continues to be, transferred across Children's Services. Learning was shared at a national level, as part of the Munro Review as well as shared with civil servants in the DFE and DOH and Home Office, colleagues from other boroughs, students and academics from a number of universities as well as OFSTED. The inquiry has also been presented at two national Community Care conferences; (June and November 2012). Our experience of co-operative inquiry directly influenced the national pilot 'Engaging Fathers in Child Protection' and shaped the development of a multi-disciplinary father inclusive strategy group and the new domestic violence strategy established for the Council.

My learning was immeasurable as I developed my sense of self in role I learnt to:

- Prioritise influence over control.
- Contribute to supportive office dynamics.
- Pursue a management ideology which is people centred.
- And influence the organisation so that the corporate culture is inspiring, therapeutic, enabling, empowering and encourages creativity in others.

Evans, (2003), describes this as '*appreciative inquiry*' where one takes a '*co-evolutionary*' search for the best in people and practice by listening to feedback, through the use of audit and a culture of learning.

3. More Men Assessed and Included

Implementation of the Method led to:

- *A 27% increase in fathers recorded on case file information*
- *I A 33% increase in the numbers of fathers' record in assessments and*
- *A 45% increase in fathers invited to attend meetings during the assessment phase.*
- *A 16% increase in the numbers of fathers attending CLA reviews*

At the beginning of the project fathers were recorded on 56% of case files. When the project concluded the figure had risen to 83%. When one considers the demographics and the sociological profile of the types of circumstances that are referred to Children's Social Care, this is an improvement although there is still much work to do.

A methodology was developed through a series of research cycles, to report on data generated from the Integrated Children's System as a model to record the involvement of fathers in social work cases. This was unplanned and emergent. Indeed one co-inquirer said that;

CI2: '*It is so useful having information about fathers' involvement in our work*'.

Another said:

CI6: '*If we can develop a robust method to record fathers' engagement we can argue for additional resource, evidence their involvement and demonstrate improved practice*'.

Another said:

CI8: '*We now know how many men attend child protection conference and family group conferences before this inquiry we did not know that*'.

However, there is a caveat when thinking about the data. There are a number of decidedly context-specific studies which reveal that innovation is substantially a negotiated process and evidence indicates that reliance on technology to bring about social change is ill-founded. (Parton; 2008). Subsequently, academic opinion is heavily weighted towards the view that social work practice is being eroded by policies promoting technology and managerialism. (White et al; 2009, Garrett: 2008).

Historically, social work was developed within an oral, written and relational narrative and tradition. In the past seven years social work practice has shifted to absorb the dominant technological and informational narrative as a way of thinking and operating. This means information becomes an increasingly valuable currency within networked systems and across the organisational boundary. From this context, Parton (2008) argues the central function of modern social work is in the expeditious collection, sharing and monitoring of information accounting for the actions of themselves and others.

We needed to achieve a balance between quantitative and qualitative data collection. Whilst also recognising that this is a practitioner / researcher activity and accept that the action research and the co-operative inquiry operated in an organisational milieu that adopted data systems as a central part of its function, identity, its organisational language and systems. It was therefore unavoidable yet crucial to use the technological systems available to further the aims of the inquiry.

Measuring the Involvement of Fathers in the Social Work Process Using ICS (April 2012).

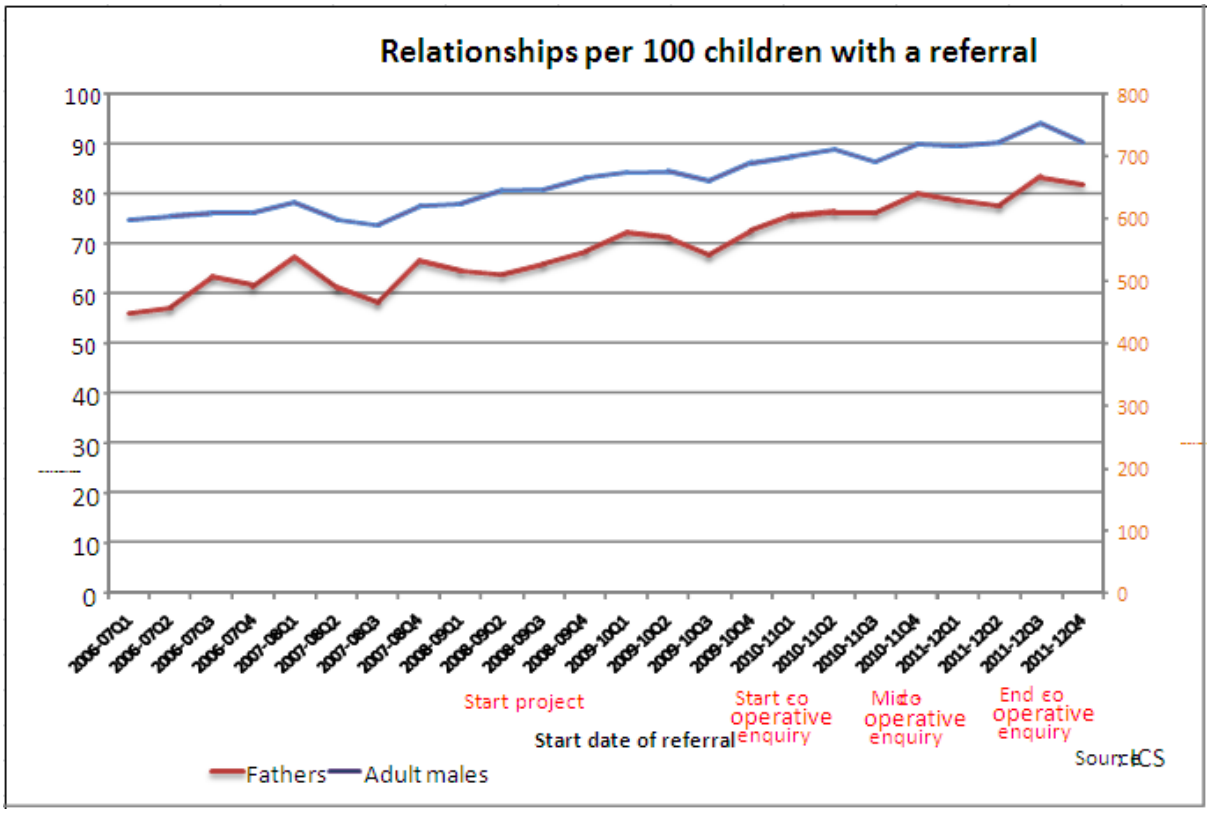
Co-inquirers have experimented and engineered a process to record fathers and their involvement in the social work process using ICS. I briefly describe and analyse a few examples of a new process to record fathers.

1. To increase the numbers of men (fathers, step-fathers, and partners) including telephone numbers, addresses and dates of birth recorded on all referrals.

Diagram 7.2 confirms that the number of fathers and adult males recorded for each child with a referral has risen steadily throughout the research period. In 2009 56% of cases had a recorded father by 2012 it was 83%. This is a 27% increase from the start to the conclusion of the research project.

The rise of fathers being recorded started in the first six months after the original Masters Research activity; '*How are Men thought about in Social Work Practice*' (September 2008) and continued rising over the following three years. The system also records all adult males, known to the family, which has again steadily increased throughout the research project.

Diagram 7.2 Relationships per 100 children with a referral



The data shows over 50% of fathers were consistently recorded within a day of the Referral. There was a consistent increase in the number of fathers with telephone numbers addresses and dates of birth recorded during the life of the project.

2 & 3 To increase the numbers of men (fathers, step-fathers, and partners) included on Initial and core assessments.

ICS recorded a 33% increase in the numbers of fathers' record in assessments and a 45% increase in fathers invited to attend meetings during the assessment phase.

4. To increase the numbers of men (fathers, step-fathers, partners) invited to and attending Initial and Review Child Protection Conferences.

This data was taken from information recorded by the Child Protection Co-ordinators on the child protection conference monitoring forms. The reduction in the number of Child Protection conferences from 2010-11 to 2011-12, makes the trend in the number of fathers attending difficult to interpret as does the change to the significant harm threshold to include domestic violence which led to an increase in the numbers of child protection conferences due to domestic violence where often the perpetrator was excluded. Despite these variables the percentage of fathers invited has increased, although of those invited the number who attended has remained stable.

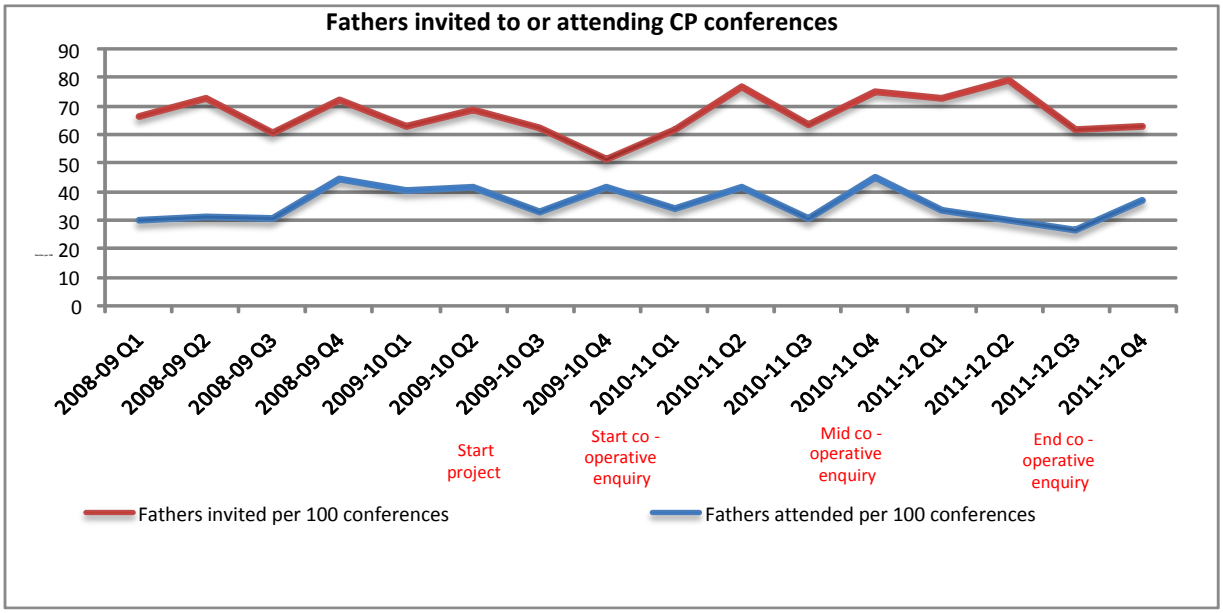


Diagram 7.3 Fathers invited to or attending Child Protection Conferences

Diagram 7.3 shows the number of fathers invited per 100 conferences has risen since the start of the co-operative inquiry and continued throughout the life of the research.

5. To increase the numbers of men (fathers, step-fathers, partners) invited to and attending Family Group Conferences.

ICS did not have the capacity to record fathers' attendance at FGCs during the life of the project. However the data was gathered separately by one of the co-inquirers. See Chapter 8.

6. To increase the numbers of men (fathers, step-fathers, and partners) invited to CLA reviews.

Diagram 7.4 illustrates an increase in the numbers of fathers attending CLA reviews from 2010 through 2011. At the start of the project fathers attended 8% of CLA reviews. When the project concluded this figure had risen to 24% a 16% increase but had then reduced 6 months later to 21 but this is still a 13% increase over three years.

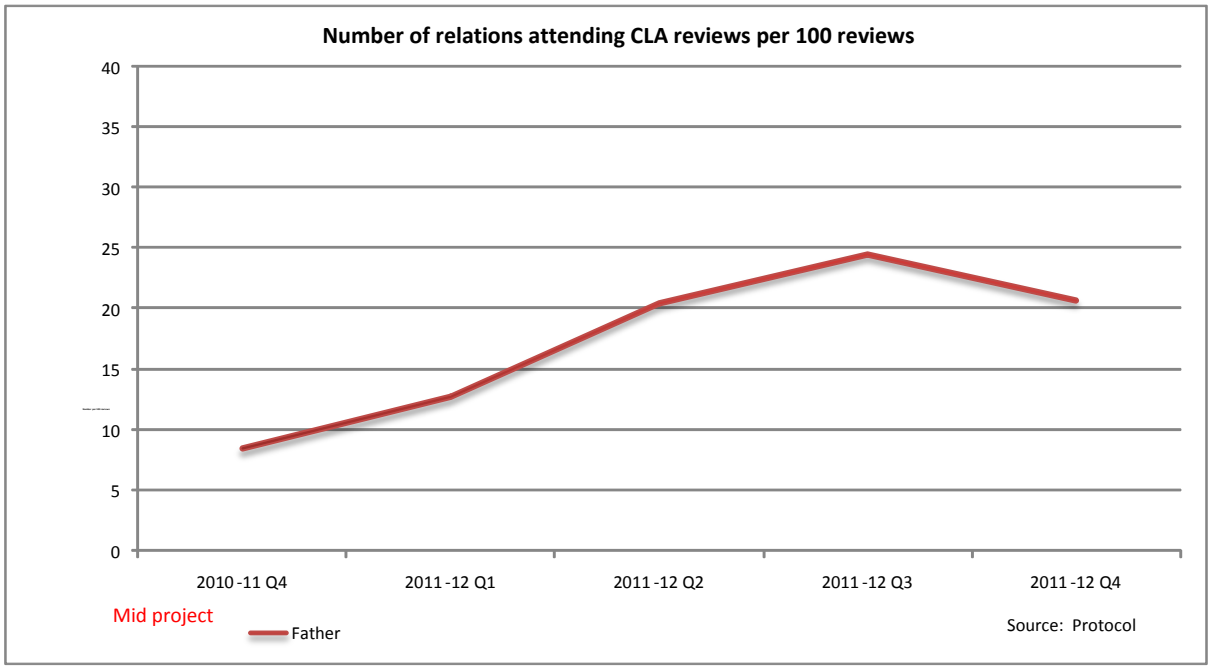


Diagram 7.4 Number of Relations attending CLA Reviews per 100 Reviews

Crucially the ICS system is not able to report on the numbers of children placed with a parent who is a father or the numbers of children placed with paternal extended families or friends. This information is not readily available.

7. Analysis

Interestingly the data from ICS demonstrates when triangulated with the comparative audit in the next Chapter confirms practice improvement and therefore the validity of the methodology. Over the life of the project there was a demonstrable increase in the numbers of fathers identified, recorded, invited to meetings and reviews, seen and assessed. The situation becomes complex within the child protection conference system as there are a number of additional variables which influence the fathers' attendance.

In terms of Children Looked After the system is simply not designed to record a fathers' involvement in the placement of children. Crucially, the system does not allow for the placement of children with fathers' or paternal extended family to be recorded. I believe this to be an important oversight, if we could evidence an increase in the numbers of children placed with fathers or paternal extended families this would demonstrate a

considerable financial saving to the Local Authorities. I believe this was the greatest disappointment of the project although we continue to invest time and energy to develop a creative way to record this information.

I can further demonstrate quantitatively that three key research aims were achieved through the development of a methodological approach to measure father inclusion. There are limits to the abilities of any binary logical decision making process however I argue here that ICS offers a range of opportunities to develop social work capabilities and capacities in terms of the inclusion of men. This research exercise informs us that rather than be defended and suspicious, as a profession, of technology we need to embrace ICS as a creative opportunity and see it for what it is, an integrated technical/social hybrid which can support social workers and managers develop practice. The experiment with ICS conducted by the co-inquirers has demonstrated that we need to encourage the transaction between technical capabilities with human knowledge, experience and practice through user-centred design and the development of new social work theory that takes account of the new world of work. (Leung: 2009). As Parton eloquently describes; *'it is important to grasp that it is the immutability of the techno-social and the coexistence of the human and technology which is key'*. (p265: 2008).

In the following chapter this data is triangulated with the findings from the pre and post case file audit as this method further evidences the further inclusion of fathers in children social care.

3 The circle of interlocking oppressions

Despite evidence of improvements in practice to include fathers in Children Social Care the implementation of the method was obstructed by the unconscious behaviours and social constructions of its participants.

3.1 Passivity

I wrote in Chapter 6 that the female participants were often silent during the first twenty to thirty minutes of each inquiry. I have reflected further on this and reviewed the literature on passivity for an additional theoretical perspective.

Passivity has become the structural basis for the daughter as reflected in Freud's Oedipal theory of the girl's passive sexuality in relation to the father's passive object. Jessica Benjamin (1998) builds on Eichenbaum and Orbach's (1983) hypothesis that passivity is best understood through the girl's dependency and compliance with her father's search for a passive object. Femininity is established as the passive counterpart of active masculinity which is the embodiment of the system of 'heterosexual complementarity' and all future male relationships.

I now recognise that the silencing of the female members of the group may have been evidence of this passivity. The male co-inquirers were actively projecting their need for hegemony, which demanded a female object to receive the feelings of helpless passivity which the male co-inquirers were trying to '*get rid of*'. The female co-inquirers were passive

at the beginning of each inquiry because they were excluded and their voices were silenced. The history of patriarchal culture encouraged them to take up their places as '*the other*'. The male co-inquirers attempted to take over each inquiry at the beginning by speaking for the women, objectifying them, and denying their authorship and ownership in the group and by attempting to idealise them. (Frosh: 1999, Benjamin: 1998).

I posit that a further contributory factor to the silencing of the women in the group was caused by gendered power inequalities which emerged in the counter-transference. I posit the women in the group felt devalued in the co-operative inquiry again as the men asserted their need for hegemony. (The co-inquiry was a microcosm of a wider society prizing male characteristics). I further posit that this was complicated further through an unconscious knowledge of inferiority imprinted on their psyche as postulated by Maguire, (2004). The men in the group failed to see the women as equal and separate beings. The psyches of co-inquirers reflect the reality that, as a society, we continue to denigrate and devalue women.

Alternatively the women, in the group, could have been silent because I was their manager and in our normal day to day work I exercised significant power and authority. I was also unconsciously in need of proclaiming my hegemony over all group. As already identified it may have taken them some time to 'get into role' and shed their anxieties that I could affect their careers.

3.2 Silencing & Blindness

As initial speculated in Chapter 6 silencing and blindness was also present as a reaction to the research inquiry as the organisation resisted the inclusion of fathers. In the first nine months of the project assistant directors of Children's Services recognised the project's value but did not see the project as statutorily necessary.

There were times when I felt like the lone voice and often stopped myself from talking about the research as I felt colleagues would feel overloaded and become de-sensitised.

Although the project was given a mandate, there was no consent to integrate the research inquiry into my duties. I feared my manager would withdraw her support because, if I mentioned working on this inquiry then, I was perceived as not prioritising my '*day job*'. I recognised that meaningful change would take many years and that the project could have achieved a great deal more if we had been provided with additional capacity. For example; it took four months to write and a further two to implement the safety planning procedure at the start of the project.

A major hindrance to the inquiries' aims remained men and their behaviour. Men continue to abuse, bully and violate children and women and social workers continued to be confronted by the consequences of this abuse each day. Unfortunately, male power and their subsequent abusive behaviours will continue to influence practice and convince many, that separation and exclusion is the only strategy to keep children safe.

3.3 Power

As conjectured in Chapters 3 and 6 power is ever present throughout the pages of this Chapter mirroring, its presence throughout the life of the co-operative inquiry. Naively I had attempted to find a balance in power, (in what I understood as power at the time), by structuring the group as equally mixed.

I firmly yet naively believed that this equal gender mixed would counter the power of language and limit the replication of the oppression of women by men in wider society. Within the context of this research, I was aware that the use of language mirrored gender differences within the group. For example; in research completed by Dutton & Nicholls (2005) some female participants use the language of care whilst male participants use the language of managerialism. In a further bid to manage the influence of power from March 2011 we established co-facilitation where 2 co-inquirers (one male / one female). No matter what, my voice in the group remained significant, it shaped the process, it energised but also restricted and I need to identify why?

I now recognise that I compensated for my feelings of powerlessness by trying to gain power from others in the group. I felt my identity and self-esteem weakened through a loss of power and my subordination to others and so I adopted alternative strategies to oppose and reassert hegemony. As identified by Messershmidt in 2000 in Chapter 2. I unconsciously, yet purposefully, put myself in a position of 'knowing better' which allowed me to impose my reality and maintain my position of hegemony: indeed hegemony over the subordination of other males in the inquiry group. This recreated existing power relations. I also believe, again using a 'Foucaultian' (1979) lens, that other co-inquirers also replicated the existing power relations through projection and identification. I believe this unchecked and unrecognised display of power denigrated the quality of reflection because, I succumbed, as did others, and re-enacted the dominate male discourse sustaining institutional power as an unconscious contribution to maintain the status quo. (Chambon, Irving & Epstein: 1999, Gutting: 1995).

I have questioned whether the increasing abilities and skills of the inquirers stirred up feelings of envy as my hegemonic position was threatened which then evoked in me the need to control by exerting power. I have reflected whether I attempted to control the inquirers through unconscious indirect envious attack by not facilitating as well and by blocking creative ideas. This may have inhibited emergence although I believe I have the capacity to desist from envious attacks as it is a major managerial asset to facilitate the development of your staff. (Obholzer: 1996).

The experience of the dyad surrounding gender relations would have not have had such an influenced the methodology and limited the findings if the project was co-sponsored, co-managed and co-led by a female senior manager as I have already identified.

One way we countered the negatives of power relations was to share knowledge as widely as possible across the inquiry group and later across the organisation in order to raise consciousness. We had to include a plan to disseminate knowledge, raise awareness and liberate through education in what Gaventa and Cornwall (2009: 72) describe as '*the*

promotion of a critical consciousness' by the development of a collective identity through the Breaking Down Barriers nomenclature which led to the construction of meaning and a culture that galvanised the organisation. Despite this, power, as Hugman (1991) posits, is a feature of both care and control meaning those in the caring professions have a complex and fraught task in being democratic. Conversely co-inquirers shared power and were given power from 'within' i.e. co-inquirers operated collectively and individually with authority and knowledge from within.

The construction of gender and the complexities of relationships between the men and between the men and women were struggled with, (often unconsciously), meaning there were many difficult questions present in the group that went unanswered. This led to a circle of interlocking oppressions and the maintenance of hegemony. (Horrocks & Jevtic: 2000).

4 Unconscious Re-enactment of Male Hegemony Mirroring the Experiences of Women

CI9: '*What I like about this group is it gives you the space to think and reflect and that is so unusual, we don't get protected time and I do want to try and continue to work like this, I don't want to go back to my old ways'*.

'On the surface' the group fulfilled many functions for the inquirers. It was a 'laboratory' for many where we experimented with practice; we spoke of our prejudice and often our dislike for these men. The group went some way to contain co-inquirers' fears, anxieties and doubts and it was helpful to become '*likeminded*' together. This was evident in our analysis during the final meeting. Many spoke of the important experience of collaboration, there was a sense of ownership of the project and group membership aided motivation with CI12;

'*It is really important to know that across the office there were twelve of us acting together, having similar conversations about inclusive practice*'.

To Summarise Additional Reasons Why Fathers are Excluded:

- *The threat of sexual attack is common and yet unspoken fear present in the minds of female social workers*
- *Over time fathers have been constructed out of social work except for those fathers who have been constructed as dangerous and are then further constructed out of social work*
- *Historically social work has 'paired off', 'coupled' and colluded with mothers to seek what Stokes (2002: 23) describes as 'salvation' to defend from fathers' future perceived violence. Fathers have been locked into an unconscious role perceived as 'bad and failing'. This results in social work failing to recognise fathers' skills and capabilities. (Bhavnani & Coyle: 2000).*
- *Social works' response to fathers, suggests the profession is not sufficiently stable to be a reliable and consistent container for the engagement of fathers.*

Whilst C9 said:

*'I have to say when chairing a CP [*child protection*] conference and seeing you or one of your team or one of this group I know we would be developing a child protection plan that would include the father, that is if he was not already in the conference participating'.*

4.1 The Group

In reflecting on the development of the co-operative inquiry group, co-inquirers, (identified via the feedback process), experienced the inquiry as an opportunity to innovatively transform practice in order to encourage '*situational change*'. This encouraged participation and ownership of the reflection-action-immersion-reflection cycle described in Chapter 3. (Heron: 1996).

The co-operative inquiry created a space for working in confidence, for taking risks, for dialogue and discussion amongst co-inquirers where differing perceptions were clarified. This allowed co-inquirers to develop mature relationships with one another. This evolution led to changes in group behaviour and allowed for greater sophistication in analysis due to familiarisation. The co-operative inquiry challenged co-inquirers' feelings of isolation by bringing different ways of thinking to '*a space to reflect over the needs of children, families and the profession*'. (Seel: 2008: 6). It built trust and confidence in relationships amongst the co-inquirers and between co-inquirers and the department. (Cooper, et al: 2003).

For example:

CI5: 'This group has allowed me to develop my own social work practice in how to include men although not just men because a lot of these skills are transferable.

CI6: I have learnt specifics though about masculinity and techniques in terms of communication as well as finding the men in the first place'.

CI7: 'I agree it is the practice techniques that have been so beneficial as well as the experience of being in a reflective consultation process which is what I consider this group to be especially when we study the cases'.

CI12: 'I talk to my dad about this work a couple of weeks ago and I asked him a lot about his childhood. I found it helpful in understanding him as a father and my experience of him'.

CI13: 'In every case now I think about whether the father is involved. It is automatic for me now because of this work'.

My role in the organisation prevented me from disclosing my anxieties about the project. I did attempt to once but experienced the group not wanting me to give up on the role. My role as well as my masculinity needed the research to be successful. I was associated, led and advocated for this research. I had invested my professional reputation and my authority in the research inquiry. This fitted into my male doctrine of being defined by one's achievements and being tested as well as being a risk taker, I risked my professional standing intensifying my own male image.

4.2 Dominant Organisational Culture

The organisational culture of the Children in Need service remained an ever present feature within the activities of the co-operative inquiry. Indeed it had a palpable presence throughout the inquiry. I now believe this dominant organisational culture, (and the hierarchies, in co-inquirers' minds, that surrounded it), influenced the implementation of the methodology. For example; success in the workplace is defined, in the UK, through dominant cultural values of self-sufficiency, independence, competition, individuality and self-expression. (Dwivedi: 2007). These values were socially constructed into the inquiry and inescapable. There are other cultures, represented in the group, that find these concepts abhorrent. The co-inquiry method should have evoked an alternative cultural construct, where value is placed on interdependence, accord, collaboration and where the identification of a problem and solution differ radically. I attempted to amalgamate both as a sense of the '*whole*' '*setting in motion a virtuous circle*'. (Bhavnani & Coyle: 2000: 321, Coll & Magnuson: 2000).

In writing up the research, I now understand that the conscious and unconscious hierarchical power relations and dominant organisational culture were a constant dimension of the inquiry and required an on-going cycle of reflection – action – immersion – reflection in order to regularly reflect on how it was influencing the methodology. Something we simply did not do.

4.3 Dominant Constructions

In hindsight, I now realise this inquiry was an attempt to upset and to think differently about traditional power relations. The application of feminist thought went some way to ameliorate the worst of the oppressions because it pushed me to examine my own multiple identities, particularly how my 'many masculinities' were operating and how this influenced my management identity within the context of the research. I have also learnt more about my own identity and the need to expose silencing mechanisms especially when they intersect with other oppressions. I want to now reflect with the reader how gender relations influenced the implementation of the methodology and in turn the findings.

Gender was a constant presence, not that I was aware of that, during the course of the inquiry. Gender is culturally and historically constructed with changeable processes where human behaviours and capacities are asymmetrically separated, attributed and expected, some as masculine and some as feminine. Gendered identities then serve as a method of domination as masculinity rejects and controls femininity or the 'other'. Additionally hegemonic masculinity dominated other masculinities represented in the co-operative

inquiry. This gendered system was automatically constructed into the inquiry as well as within its associated institutions and the interpersonal relationships amongst inquiry members. This led to the positioning of some men (namely me) as dominant over subordinated men and all men dominant over women who are treated as 'other'. (Benjamin: 1998).

From analysis of the films and transcripts, I recognise male hegemony operating in the co-operative inquiry. It has been crucial to explore and deconstruct these hegemonic and multiple male gendered identities and this has led me to explore in this Chapter what it means to be a man and my culpability within the dominant patriarchal system. In spite of my liberal socialist intentions I contributed to male hegemony throughout the life of this inquiry mirroring the male hegemonic model I described in Chapter 2. It is ironic that I sought to shine the light on male oppression in social work and yet what I have done is to maintain a model of domination, (over other men as well as other women). Positively, this research activity has allowed me to examine systems of domination and my role in their maintenance and perpetuation. (Maguire: 2009).

I have also reconsidered the systems of male hegemony in the silencing of the female co-inquirers. Did the male inquirers prevent the women from speaking using entrenched unconscious forms of discounting and gatekeeping to maintain power? I certainly, yet unknowingly, colluded as a male and as the research initiator. Reflecting back, I note silencing of the survivor is common in cases of domestic violence and other male abuse. On reflection I recognise I was a major contributor to the process of unconscious re-enactment of male hegemony in the inquiry. I re-enacted the male oppression of women and subordination of marginalised men and I believe this led to co-inquirers not feeling safe in the group.

Referring to my personal biography I have reflected whether this need to take on tasks is linked to my insecure attachment, my need to impress and rescue myself by rescuing others as well as an overarching paternal responsibility which I powerfully felt towards the co-inquirers but which I also feel towards social workers in my teams.

Despite, having other co-inquirers facilitate, I found myself wanting to direct and manage the group and I had to regularly request co-inquirers challenge me over this. My over-involvement was also evident in the number of actions assigned to me at the end of each meeting. On average my name was assigned to approximately one third of all actions from every co-operative inquiry meeting. I found myself needing, (or wanting), to intercede to identify emotional responses, additional tasks or research findings. I positioned myself as 'a central person' throughout the life of the research. I have had this view confirmed by an external observer who perceived me as having enhanced status in the group.

I think the degree of influence I maintained over the group was significant, impacting upon individuals' behaviour and the outcome of the research and was in opposition to the purity of the co-operative inquiry methodology as advanced by Bradbury and Reason (2009), Douglas: (2000) and Heron: (1996).

I now recognise that I maintained a dominant position in the group for a variety of reasons: From a superficial vantage point; I believe I initiated the project and had experience in researching this topic. However, I believe the need for control originated from more dominant constructions. Again referring to my personal biography in Chapter 1 I think this need to control originates in the instability in my relationships in my childhood.

I maintained hegemony by maintaining control, and therefore a position of advantage, to minimise the threat I perceived existed because I felt outnumbered by other co-inquirers. I had intervened in the lives of others and I had to accept responsibility for the consequences of my actions. I posit that initiating the research left a residual of responsibility for the inquiry, throughout its life, in my mind and the minds of other co-inquirers. I was dependent on the co-inquirers as I needed their active involvement for the inquiry to operate and be legitimate. I believe this dependency on the 'other' generated feelings of envy from me which then unconsciously provoked me to control co-inquirers to prevent them from exercising their leadership or power. I fought against and opposed their opposition. (Stein: 1997).

This was then additionally complicated by gender as it can never be avoided. Gender cannot be transcended as it is one of the most important categorisers as it structures internal and external experiences and so is a basic method of perception. Consequently, gender and sexual difference could not have been denied in the group as it fuelled what was said and thought about in the group. It is relevant to point out that writing about sexual difference is not a neutral activity as I use the categories to organise experience. It has certainly brought me '*head to head*' with my own investments and desires. For example:

I could not escape my leadership function which can be described in two ways:

1. Acts that sought to repair relationships whilst maintaining the primary function of the group; to work together (something I tried to do with my parents i.e. repair their relationship) and;
2. Acts that were intentionally instigated to facilitate the group towards achievement of actions.

I do think I maintained some control to ensure I achieved the second act. Maintaining control could also have been an attempt to contain my own emotional needs as I attempted to dictate to those I needed to depend on. I also wonder whether I rigidly defended against ambivalence towards a strong constituent of femininity in my own psyche, (although I identify strongly with both my parents).

I think the need to lead, manage and maintain control may also be institutionalised in my mind because of the way existing power relations are structured into my psyche which were a result of my experiences in childhood identified via my personal biography.

The feedback I received from co-inquirers at the end of the project was useful in understanding my influence on the project. In summary co-inquirers perceived, my often unconscious, leadership in three ways;

- *'as a form of paternalism denoting knowledge and understanding,*
- *as charismatic leadership*
- *or as power and authority being generated from other parts of the system but directed through me'.*

In reviewing the transcripts, watching the films, reading extracts from my reflective journal and receiving informal feedback from participants I continued to co-facilitate, (and often lead the group), until the last three co-operative inquiries where I became increasingly an observer. On reflection, I have held my current post for five years. I hold a degree of authority from these years of experience, (supported by an organisational policy about delegated responsibility). I had seniority in post and in the co-operative inquiry and a mandate and that had palpable influence in the room. These 'components' added to my authority allowing the project to progress and develop but contrariwise these components limited research outcomes. How the method was implemented and the research findings would have been different if I had co-launched and co-sponsored the project with a senior female manager.

I was given the necessary authority by the system because of male power and white privilege. This is an important consideration for others who want to reproduce the learning.

4.4 Unconscious Re-enactment of Male Hegemony; Silence and Blindness Continue

Gender difference in the group served as a challenge to us all as it sexualised our activities and dominated the discourse particularly as we failed to deconstruct how gender difference was influencing the research inquiry. We should have named our differences more often. I should have also read more widely about gender in preparation for the research. I, like most men, maintained a male frame of reference to define women's experience. I also subordinated other masculinities in the group mirroring in the inquiry and through language, the marginalising of non-hegemonic groups in wider society.

5. The Personal, the Professional and the Managerial 'Self'

The theory of triangulation allowed me fresh insight into my desire for reparation which gave me the impetus to initiate and complete this project.

Hughes and Pengally (2004) point out that; triangular relationships are fraught with complexity lending themselves to splitting and projection. As in any relationship; competitiveness, envy, rivalry, fear and greed exist and are exacerbated through differences in gender and ethnicity keeping those who are triangulated alienated and in stereotyped roles. A familiar excluding dynamic dominates triangular relationships with one person being left out because they are causing the most anxiety. This is despite those in triangular relationships being functionally and conceptually interconnected meaning they cannot be treated separately. Miller (in Horowitz: 2007) points out the integral tension within all of us is between the need for separateness and the need to attach and the need to coexist between these feelings.

5.1 Paternal Alienation

I described how paternal alienation was operating in Children's Social Care in Chapter 2. I re-discovered paternal alienation in my own life and in the life of the project as the research concluded. In retrospect, taking a 'triangular' perspective and referring to my personal biography in Chapter 1, my conflict with my father in adolescence was not uncommon as it echoed the concealed mother-son attachment and buried mother – father conflict. As conflicts continued, and my father absented himself, I became more detached and remote and subsequently more attached to my mother as we paired. A cycle of persecution and victimisation then developed between my parents and me through threat and fear. I further hypothesise that; my parents' marital conflict was a significant factor in my emotional distancing from my father. In terms of family triangulation the hypothesis of paternal alienation was clearly evident in my own behaviour towards my father and in my current behaviour to repair as illustrated in Diagram 7.5 and in retrospective in my personal biography in Chapter 1. I posit that triangulation is a common feature in children and family social work and it further explains paternal alienation.

6. Triangulation

Frosh (1996) and others write that when an alliance is formed in a three person system then one of those three points will always be left out. Triangulation can often occur when anxiety between a dyad can no longer be managed and is released by implicating a third party who either takes sides or offers an alternative route for the anxiety. Triangulation became an increasingly legitimate hypothesis in my analysis as I repeatedly came to the conclusion that fathers and paternal alienation became that route of anxiety. I identified four forms of triangulation which are illustrated in Diagram 7.5 – 7.8. (Brown: 2012). I identified the first triangle in my relationships with my mother and father and I believe this triangle remains highly influential to my life and work today. I now recognise I was motivated to complete this research in a powerful attempt to continue to repair my relationship with my father who had been excluded in our family system. This has allowed me to make sense of my parents' relationship and discover further feelings of affection for my father which I had repressed since adolescence. My father has remained an enduring figure in my life no matter how much I resisted. I now recognise, that in the Oedipal conflict of my adolescence, I split off and idealised my mother as a defensive against passivity but also as a response to what I perceived as a persecutory father. This allowed me to de-idealise my father in what Barrett (1993: 67) terms as '*a form of symbolic patricide'*, which, in the short term, liberated me.

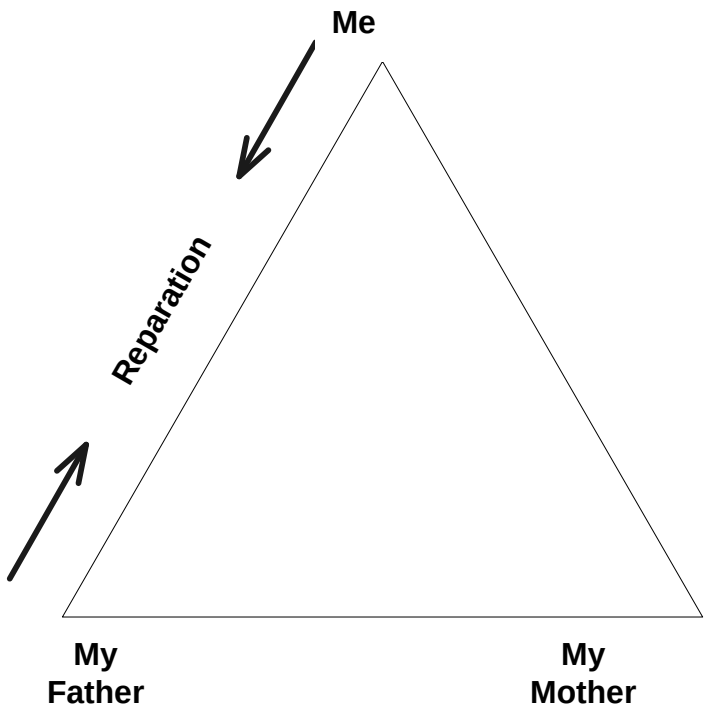


Diagram 7.5. Repairing my relationship with my father

Reflecting and relating my personal biography in Chapter 1 further I have also concluded that my life long quest for greater accomplishments is, in part, due to my desire to maintain our bond, a quest for love and prematurely abandoned feelings of competition. I recognise that part of my motivation to complete this research is a persistent solicitation of my father's approval, his recognition and confirmation. However, it is also an attempt to continue to repair our relationship. (Breen: 1993).

I recognise how powerfully triangulation operated in my relationship with my parents and how I was a 'triangulated child' which left me with difficulties coping in adolescence. I '*acted out*' in an unconscious strategy to gain my parents' attention and move them away from their usual conflictual relationship in an attempt that they would work together to focus on my needs. The greater my oppositional behaviour, with subsequent patricidal conflict and retaliatory anxiety, (against passivity), equalled the intensity of my feelings and my need for closeness to my father in adolescence. This insight has allowed me to move closer to a harmonious sense of self.

6.1 Triangulation and a Need for Reparation: Social Work and Fathers

My original unconscious motivation to complete this research was an attempt to repair the fractured connection between social work, fathers and parents where it is fathers who are the 'excluded term'.

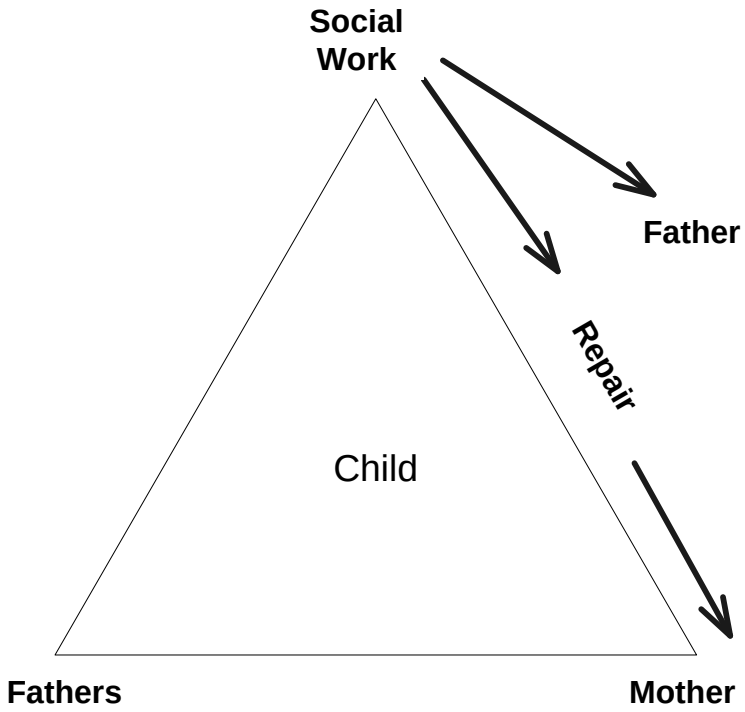


Diagram 7.6. Repairing the relationship between social work and mothers and fathers

6.2 Triangulation and a Need for Reparation Social Work and Fathers

Reparation can be further identified in the third triangle.

The research reminds others that the social work role is to '*repair families'* particularly repair the father's relationship with his child and the father and mother's relationship. It appears a common determinant in many families, who require social work services, where the father has not been able to encourage an early identification encouraging the child to separate perpetuating the cycle of paternal alienation.

Despite this need to repair families application of triangulation demonstrates how historically and defensively social work has '*paired off', 'coupled'* and colluded with mothers to seek what Stokes (2002: 23) describes as '*salvation*' to defend from fathers' future perceived violence. Fathers have been locked into an unconscious role perceived as '*bad and failing*'. This results in social work failing to recognise fathers' skills and capabilities. (Bhavnani & Coyle: 2000).

Social works' response to fathers, suggests the profession is not sufficiently stable to be a reliable and consistent container for the engagement of fathers.

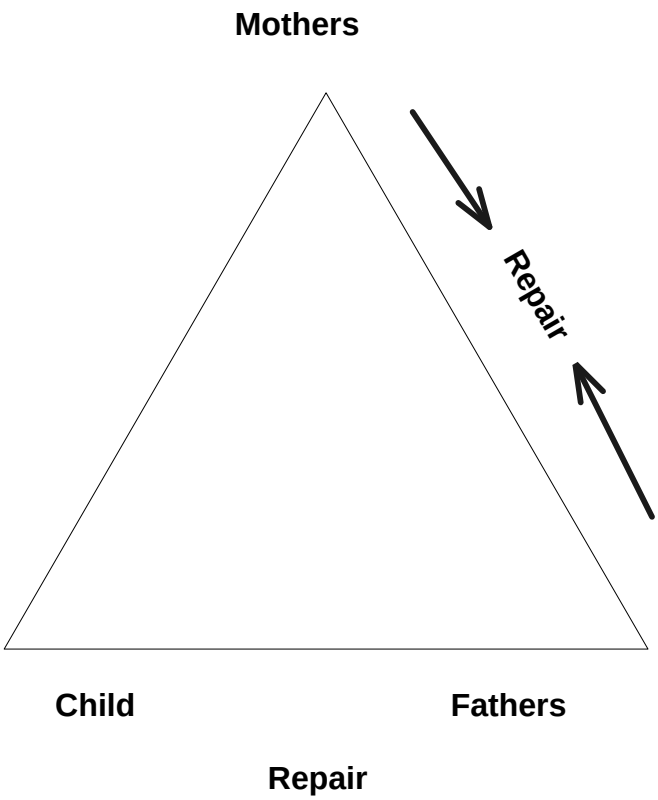


Diagram 7.7. Repairing the relationship between social work and mothers and fathers

6.3 A Model of Triangulation and Reparation

A fourth triangle operated outside of the inquiry and the organisation as illustrated in Diagram 7.8. My 'three-way' supervision was always a powerful, productive and insightful event and yet it mirrored the complexities of gender and triangulation. There is learning here. I now recognise that I created circumstances which allowed me to continue to repair my relationships by identifying and convincing Andrew and Agnes to supervise me; little did I know that they had worked together for the last two decades. I unconsciously, chose two idealised 'parents' who created a containing space which allowed me to test out hypotheses, learn, and relearn like any child. The dynamic within this triangular relationship produced further reparation and evidenced that positive triangulation can be managed through sophisticated communication which allowed us to think about our own behaviours within the dyad whilst remaining equal members.

Communication is the fundamental feature in each of these triangulated systems in order to re-engage and manage anxiety. In each of the four triangulated systems, I have identified where the third person can act as a substitute for direct communication or as a messenger to carry the communication to that main party.

In family systems as in professional social work systems a great deal of dissatisfaction is expressed about the 'third party'; in each case studied the father. This is clearly unhealthy and harmful but as social workers we have fallen into triangulation as a result of our sophisticated defences to avoid working with abusive men.

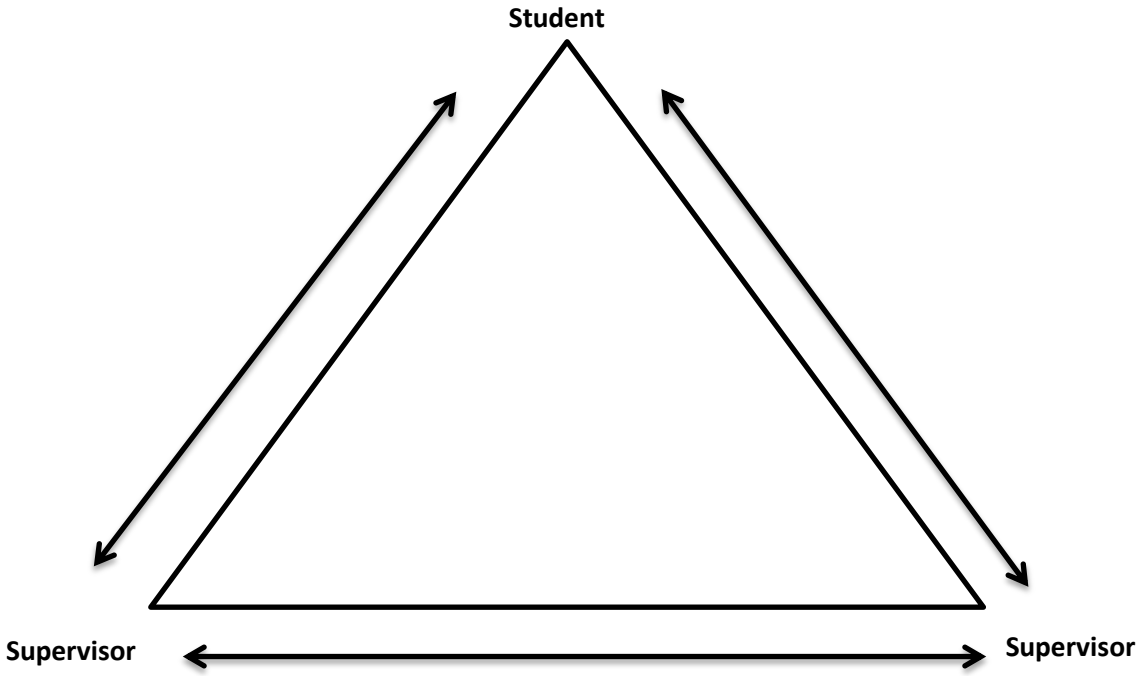


Diagram 7.8. Managed Triangulation

To include fathers you require:

- Organisations need to encourage cultural change where it is safe to talk about father inclusion
- Keep focused on basic practice
- When engaging fathers the work must always be located within an obligation to confront entrenched power relations and recognition that fathers are situated within a complex network of relationships of power with other men, women, and children and within wider society.
- When engaging fathers the conscious and unconscious hierarchical power relations and dominant organisational culture must be regularly reflected upon.
- When engaging fathers we need to attempt to upset and to think differently about traditional power relations.

7. *Replicating the Research*

The co-operative inquirers are keen that the research be replicated. With this in mind:

7.1 A Female Initiator

Clearly then the implementation of the methodology and the findings would be different if a female senior manager in Children's Social Care established a similar research inquiry. It would have been driven with a different set of sympathies.

On reflecting on the research process I have concluded that it would have been preferable for the research to be co-sponsored and co-managed by a senior female manager.

I, like many men, have a propensity for '*phototropic manly adventurism*'. (Gilmore: 1995: 23). In other words, I have a tendency to revert to a more traditional definition of a man. This means satisfactory functioning within the established patterns of the male script but also self-promotion and hype, performing and being on view and having the nerve to expose oneself to risk and criticism. I was guilty of this narcissism. Kline, (1972), confirms this view that this public performance is a private phantasy life exposed and played out.

There is clear evidence, (through Appendix 2 for example), that there was much 'doing', there was decisive action, a need to resolve difficulties and solve problems perceived as important by others.

These are all traditional attributes of being perceived as good at being a man and I am certainly guilty of all of these characteristics throughout the life of the inquiry and throughout my life. I now recognise that this need for action and acting like a man as cultural encoding of social constructions of impulse sublimation particularly of libido and aggressive drivers. Across cultures, males are socialised to win against powerful odds. Thereby action is a form of avoidance directing attention away from reflection and introspection instead focusing on culturally endorsed channels of problem solving and measured achievement. However, it is greater than avoidance of reflection it is also socially acceptable encouragement to resist the opposites; of caution, self-doubt inactivity as well as more pronounced feminist characteristics. Ironically and to bring it 'full circle' again this 'man-acting' and these male ideologies act in a way where female co-inquirers were oppressed. (Gilmore: 1995).

What this means is that active transactional and transformational leadership behaviours are positively associated with potency, cohesion and performance; all powerfully masculine. (Edwards: 2010).

The experience of this research informs us that when engaging fathers the work must always be located within an obligation to confront entrenched power relations and recognition that fathers are situated within a complex network of relationships of power with other men, women, and children and within wider society.

7.2 Need to Address Methodological Limitations

Chapters 6 and 7 articulate many limits and difficulties in implementing the research methodology. Any replication of the research would need to address these and others.

Participation levels fluctuated with only five co-inquirers attending all fourteen inquiry group meetings although a central eight attended over 90% of all meetings whilst the other four attended between 75% and 80% of all meetings with some cajoling from me. As organisational change was a constant workers were often moved positions or expected to take on additional responsibilities adding additional pressures and demands on co-inquirers' time. One participant left the organisation and another went on maternity leave, (a powerful influence in the co-inquiry), and both were replaced by other enthusiastic co-inquirers.

The obvious constraints in the group were managed by regularly reviewing and developing the original co-inquiry contract each quarter.

There were differences in how participants understood the co-operative inquiry method meaning some were more fully initiated than others. In turn this meant some participants achieved more, generated more data and generally brought about greater transformation. This meant there were differences and on occasion unequal contribution and as Heron (1996; 86) points out this could; '*become a fixed pathology in the group and overlap with a sexist imbalance'.* Some co-inquirers simply had better presentation and verbal skills meaning they contributed during the reflective stages in a more confident manner.

Apart from the obvious issues of hierarchy and gender transported as identified earlier there was also difference amongst the co-inquirers in confidence, intellect, presence and projection. Everyone speaks but only some are listened too. It was crucial that we were aware of this and able to ameliorate some of these issues to get closer to authentic collaboration including the analysis of the transcripts and the films of the group meetings.

The environment literally limited authentic collaboration. Our reflective meetings were held in a glass walled large meeting room in the centre of an open planned office. We were visible to colleagues and when a social worker or manager, in need of advice or concerned for the welfare of a child, then they would on-occasion intrude into our reflective space. This is an accepted behaviour in our organisation but it limited reflection as co-inquirers especially myself were called from the meeting room. The organisational culture also limited the development of co-operative inquiry. The fast paced, high performance nature of the organisation was not conducive to this research activity of this methodology.

Other constraints included:

i. Time; 3 hours every 6 weeks was a timescale that had to fit into co-inquirers busy schedule, more could have been achieved if there had been an increased frequency of meetings
ii. Resources: the resources were adequate however the greatest weakness was in my leadership skills which were only passable.

iii. Complexity; This was a complex intervention where we developed an active system and inserted it into a highly complex set of systems. It is therefore impossible to replicate this research in its entirety. As Pawson (2006) posits; '*non-equivalence is the norm'.*

iv. Selection; Did I have the right people in the group? I had a diverse group of practitioners who were committed and enthusiastic however I should have had representation from each team from the beginning.

v. Roles: (as identified previously).

vi. I think one of the biggest limitations in the implementation of the methodology, (apart from myself), was not employing a randomised control trial (RCT) across the 6 social work teams. I should have had three teams represented and used the other three to then compare if the intervention had merit. I base this view on Asmussen and Weizel (2009) who cite that randomised control trials are the most vigorous method to determine whether an intervention has been successful. Although, I note it would have only been a single RCT it would have taken place over an eighteen month period. This longevity would have added to its legitimacy. I would therefore request that colleagues use multiple RCTs to show long term outcomes across multiple settings.

7.3 Leading the Inquiry

We all have internal schemas about the role of leaders. The co-inquirers were no different. The co-inquirers subtly projected these expectations onto me. I was influenced by their transference conforming to their projections and taking on my normal leadership role no matter how hard I tried to discard these vestiges.

The change needed required active leadership. I used my energy, enthusiasm and determination to establish and maintain group direction and the inquiry that emerged was influenced and led by me. This is a methodological limitation and despite the persistent encouragement of co-facilitation my and the group's need for dynamic leadership remained.

7.4 Barriers

At times the co-inquiry became a shared psychological defence structure. This was most notable in the group's focus on designing a methodology to record fathers using digital systems, a safe and predictable pastime rather than concentrating on more difficult questions like the silencing of the female co-inquirers. This led to the reinforcement of individual defences against anxiety which in turn supported the risk averse and pessimistic culture described by Cooper et al. (2003). It is therefore crucial that I should have received and given regular feedback. (Miller; 1999). The co-inquiry occasionally ironically but always vividly, demonstrated and mirrored the failings in the system and in services to children and families.

A significant challenge to the inquiry and my ability to reflect was in attempting, as an inside practitioner researcher, to undertake a complex piece of research within Children's Social Care.

How could I have created a mental space for the inquiry when our minds were consumed by the stresses and the emotional reactions of child protection? On reflection; our working environment prevented thought. For example; I believe that the organisational pressures and countertransference at times led me to provide co-inquirers with what Copely & Forryan (1986: 169), describe as 'pseudo-listening' and 'pseudo-containment'. I now recognise that children's specialist services 'lends itself to this type of functioning'. (Horne: 2006: 7).

Most of the co-inquirers were 'inside practitioners' and this gave us opportunity to access a rich and large amount of data which was tested via the cycles of reflection-action-immersion-reflection as well as through the quantitative activity of the case file audit. Despite its subject nature the insider practitioner nature of the research was wholeheartedly positive.

Supervision guided me towards the path of what Palmer (1999: 89) describes as maturation as I develop a '*reflective observer position*' and a '*system-as-a-whole*' perspective. Fundamental to the learning experience has been greater insight into how irrational and unconscious fantasies obstruct and grossly interfere with the research process. This allows me to better understand conflict, power and authority. I can now promote more creative institutional functioning whilst being aware of the emotional life within the organisation. This third position then allows me to engage with workers' feelings of alienation and denigration.

An Unexpected and Unplanned Independent Evaluation and Validation of the Research by OFSTED

An unexpected 'independent evaluation' of the research inquiry took place in January and February 2012 in the guise of a formal two week OFSTED Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Services. The inspectors concluded:

'Voluntary and community sector organisations see the council as a highly valued partner that works openly and effectively with them. Including; in relation to different aspects of commissioning involving needs analysis, service specification and procurement. These outstanding links have enabled delivery of services by voluntary and community sector organisations in line with agreed priorities and have bought improvements such as the increased involvement of young fathers with children centres. (P8).

'The LSCB makes very good use of audit to satisfy itself of safeguarding performance across the partnership. It monitors closely progress against priorities and the implementation of relevant action plans and these are continually reviewed and revised to ensure effective safeguarding services are in place across the partnership. Examples include the need to improve engagement with fathers has been identified and communicated to a range of agencies, and in consequence there has been an increase in assessments involving fathers and in the number of children placed with their fathers or with paternal extended families'. (P18).

Practice in the Service had improved in terms of father inclusion:

- *Social workers felt safer and more confident to identify and include the father*
- *To involve fathers' social workers needed frameworks like the Barnardo's Risk Assessment Matrix and the CAADA DASH to assess perpetrators of abuse.*
- *Social workers reported they were more aware of different ways to communicate with men Social workers identified areas of vulnerability and need in men.*

Conclusion

Organisational change is complex and can only be achieved through a continuous process of worker participation and through the deconstruction of socially constructed concepts and unconscious behaviours. By paying attention to the emotional life within the organisation I have identified a number of interlocking themes including; gender, multiple identities, interlocking oppressions, power and triangulation; all components of the feminist critique. Only when we have sophisticated analysis is it possible to discover the real reasons for resistance. Change can only be achieved if an organisation is sensitive to issues of gender and provides a containing space to manage its emotional life.

To replicate the research then social workers and others need to be contained; those involved must have greater awareness of gender relations and racism and will need support from across the hierarchy and have access to highly reflective supervision whilst being prepared to reflect on one's own actions.

I think we could have achieved more if we were able to create further reflectivity. I have become increasingly aware of how I had contributed to limiting reflection but even so I do think there is evidence that the inquiry produced positive outcomes in relation to greater transferable knowledge in the inclusion of fathers in social work.

Therefore this paper concludes by advocating for a management and leadership style which espouses staff cohesion and champions social work empowerment. I base this on the role and function of co-inquirers who were the instruments of transformation and the 'yardstick' as to the progress of that transformation. ('*The instrument is the evidence is the outcome*'). (Heron: 1998: 101).

This qualitative analysis of the Breaking Down Barriers Inquiry evidences that despite methodological limitations the co-operative inquiry did influence and improve systems and practice which led to an increase in the inclusion of fathers within social work interventions. This statement is supported by the findings from pre and post-case file audit and the next Chapter.

Chapter 8: The Case-File Audit: A Pre and Post Inquiry Comparison

Chapter 8: The Case-File Audit: A Pre and Post Comparison

1. Introduction

This Chapter tests whether, quantitatively, the co-operative inquiry demonstrably improved the inclusion of fathers in children social care by analysing the results of the case file audits that took place before the co-operative inquiry started and again at its completion.

The data clearly indicates an increase in the inclusion of fathers in Children's Social Care's allocated cases during the life of the inquiry. This indication is reinforced when the data is triangulated with the performance information generated from ICS as discussed in Chapter 7.

2. Summary of Method

In February 2009 I audited seventy case files chosen at random, (using the exact same framework employed by Ashley *et al* (2009) where they examined sixty case files in three local authorities in their seminal work; '*Fathers Matters 2*'). I then repeated the audit in February 2012. (See Appendix 1). The cases were chosen at random from five of the six Children-in Need Teams. In brief in 2009 and 2012 we audited six cases where children were in foster care, thirty nine children-in-need cases, six cases where children were subject to care proceedings but where the child was not in care, eighteen cases where children were subject to child protection plans and one case where the child was subject to child protection plans and in care. The children were of various ages although there were more boys (42 to 27 in 2009) than girls (44 to 25 in 2012) and a mixture of ethnicities. (See Chapter 3 for comprehensive details of the auditing process). The co-inquiry used basic measures to attest to organisational transformation and to evidence greater father inclusion as identified by co-inquirers in the induction meetings:

1. To increase the numbers of men (fathers, step-fathers, and partners) including telephone numbers, addresses and dates of birth recorded on all referrals.
2. To increase the numbers of men (fathers, step-fathers, and partners) included on Initial assessments.
3. To increase the numbers of men (fathers, step-fathers, and partners) comprehensively assessed as part of a core assessment.
4. To increase the numbers of men (fathers, step-fathers, partners) invited to and attending Initial and Review Child Protection Conferences.
5. To increase the numbers of men (fathers, step-fathers, partners) invited to and attending Family Group Conferences.
6. To increase the numbers of men (fathers, step-fathers, and partners) invited to LAC reviews.
7. To increase the numbers of men involved (fathers, step-fathers, partners) when initiating court proceedings.

Both sets of data was entered onto a pre-designed multinomial model using an Excel spreadsheet which allowed for Excel to forecast calculations to measure the differences in practice at the start and end of the placement. This methodology discovered that:

3. Findings from Comparative Case-file Audits 2009 and 2012

Increase the numbers of Fathers recorded on ICS

There is evidence of an increase in the numbers of fathers named on cases files. Diagram 8.1 records that 71% of cases had a named father in 2009 and this increased to 86% by 2012 a 15% increase over the life of the research.

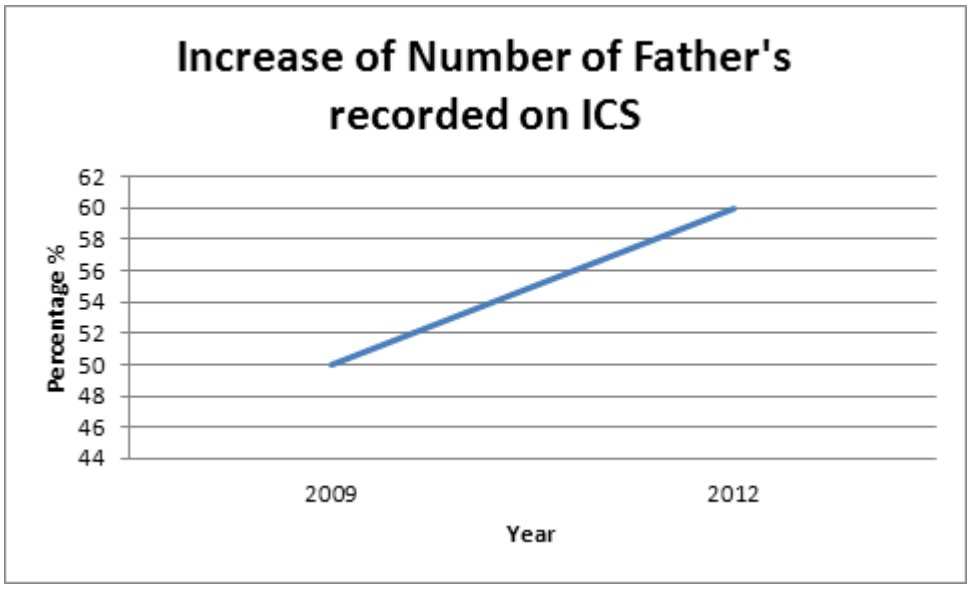
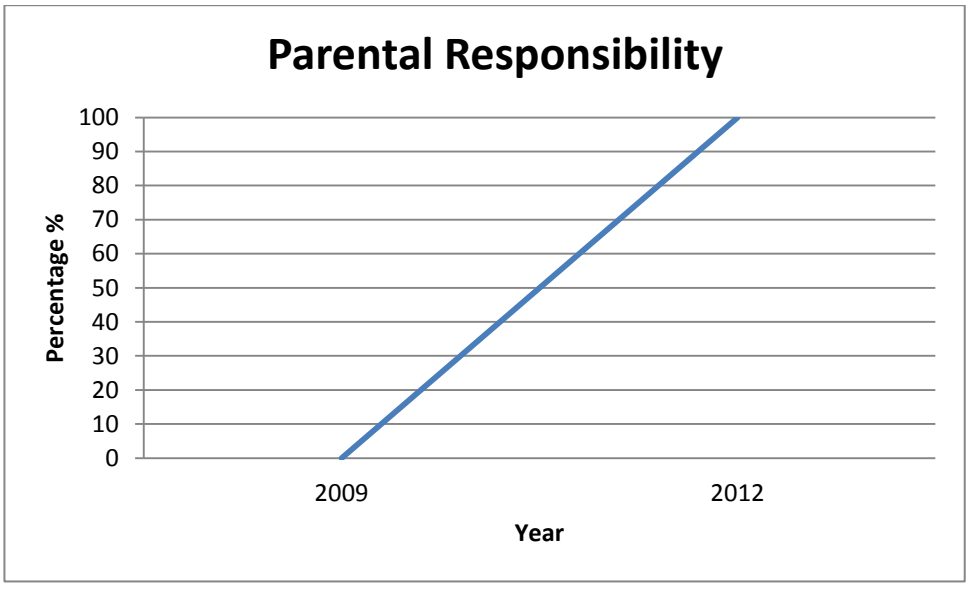


Diagram 8.1 Birth father named on file

Fathers and their children

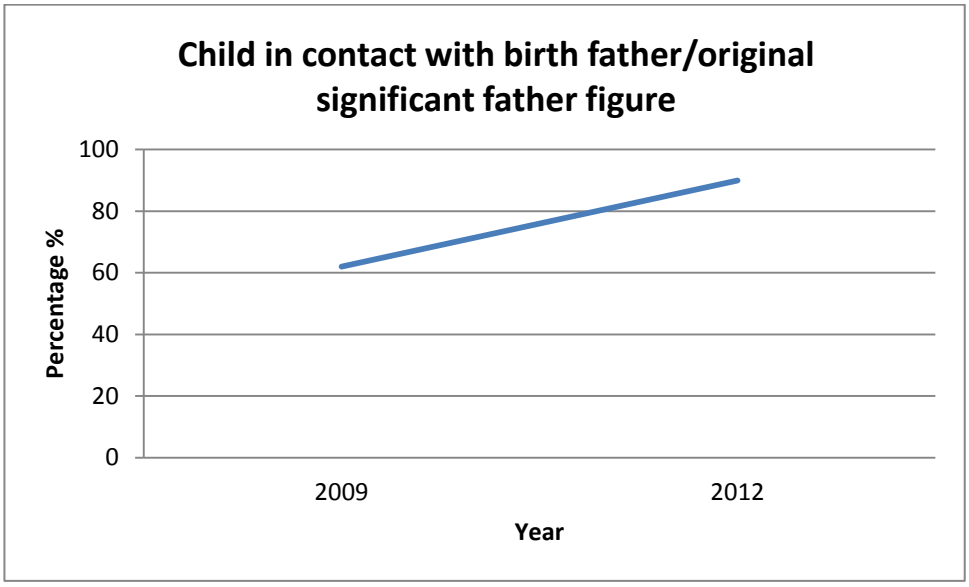
The data about parental responsibility evidences an increase in information held by CSC about fathers. In 2009 only 22% of fathers had parental responsibility recorded on ICS. By 2012 this had increased to 51% a 29% increase from the start to the conclusion of the research project. Diagram 8.2 powerfully indicates that social workers have improved the recording of fathers' details and were asking questions about fathers' whereabouts.

Diagram 8.2 Parental Responsibility



Contact is often an emotive and conflictual axis for separated parents and their extended families. In 2009 we did not know if the father was having contact with the child in 62% of cases. The anxiety here is whether the father presents as a risk to the children but the social worker may remain unaware. By February 2012 90% of the cases, where the fathers' details were recorded, it was also recorded whether he was having contact. We can observe a significant improvement in the identification and recording of fathers if the child is having contact with his / her father from the start to the conclusion of the research project.

Diagram 8.3 Child in contact with birth father/other significant father figure



Fathers and the Social Work Process

The audit evidences an increase in the numbers of fathers invited to a meeting as part of an assessment with father involvement in assessment improving from 15% in 2009 to 57% in 2012 as illustrated in Diagram 8.4. There has been a 29% increase in fathers involved in assessments with a 42% increase in fathers being invited to attend meetings from 2009 - 2012. This is evidence of an increase in fathers' participation and involvement.

There is clear evidence that if you invite men they will attend meetings challenging the assumption that men will not engage with social workers and are disinterested in their children. Further analysis of the data indicates there is an increase of involvement in assessments by fathers even when the father has not been seen. i.e. telephone contact or email contact or contact from paternal extended family.

Diagram 8.4 fathers attending meetings

Social workers are still not initially exploring the father as an alternative carer in most cases although there remains evidence to suggest there has been a large increase (64%) in social workers' considering the father's situation in ongoing planning for the child.

Fathers and the Child Protection Process

The recording of fathers at child protection conferences is relatively new and there were no records from the 2009 audit to analyse. It can be reported that data on fathers attending conferences was being recorded from January 2010 and by the end of 2010 it was recorded that 60% of invited fathers attended review child protection conferences. By February 2012 the figure remained static with 61% of fathers who were invited attending the review child protection conference.

Fathers and the Family Group Conference Process

In relation to Family Group Conferences, (FGCs) as part of a co-inquirer's action the family group co-ordinators have changed the manner in which they record conferences. Step fathers and partners are now recorded as are all paternal extended family members. 52% of all fathers attended FGCs in 2011 / 12 (with a further 3% excluded and 21% in prison and therefore unable to attend). This was a slight decrease from the 2010 / 11 figure of 56% (although more FGCs took place in 2010/11).

Analysis

We can deduce that there has been a significant improvement in the identification and recording of fathers' information throughout the life of the Breaking Down Barriers Inquiry. I make this statement based on the following:

- The 'Pre' audit identified that fathers were recorded on 56% of case files. When the project concluded the figure had risen to 83%.
- 71% of cases had a named father in 2009 and this increased to 86% by 2012
- The number of fathers invited per 100 child protection conferences has risen since the start of the co-operative inquiry and continued throughout the life of the research.
- At the start of the project fathers attended 8% of LAC reviews. When the project concluded this figure had risen to 24%
- In 2009 only 22% of fathers had parental responsibility recorded on ICS. By 2012 this had increased to 51%
- 90% of the cases, where the fathers' details were recorded, it was also recorded whether he was having contact
- There has been a 29% increase in fathers involved in assessments.
- Fathers are assessed in 57% of all assessments and improvement from 15% before the research commenced
- The audit indicated that there has been a large increase (64%) in social workers' considering the father's situation in ongoing planning for the child

Triangulation

The evidence that the co-inquiry promoted greater inclusion of fathers can be further triangulated the findings from the pre and post case file audits with the performance information developed and was supported when co-inquirers met twice after the end of the inquiry cycle as described in Chapter 7.

Just to remind the reader the ICS system confirmed that the number of fathers and adult males recorded for each child with a referral has risen steadily; in 2009 56% of cases had a recorded father by 2012 it was 83%. This is a 27% increase. ICS further recorded an increase in fathers involved in assessment and a 16% increase in men attending LAC reviews. Fustratingly ICS did not have the capacity at the start of the project to record fathers attending child protection conferences or family group conferences.

The comparative audit and the performance data generated from ICS, when triangulated, evidence that there is a clear increase in social workers recording fathers' names, addresses, telephone numbers, ethnicities and dates of birth and their current whereabouts. More fathers are involved in social work assessments and are attending meetings. Most notably social workers are now recording fathers' information and their contact with them. I believe the data evidences, to a degree, a reduction in the defensive thinking that originally led to father exclusion, an increase in social work confidence and an emergent change in social work practice. I believe this indicates the beginnings of an organisational cultural change and signals that the research project and the co-operative inquiry achieved many of its aims.

More work needs to be undertaken to record and involve the paternal extended family both in terms of resource and risk. There are also weaknesses in recording the father's risks and strengths and we still need to continue to involve fathers continuously in care planning especially non-residential fathers.

Conclusion

The Pre and Post case-file audits demonstrates that the co-operative inquiry activities led to an increase in the numbers of fathers included in referrals, assessments and social work interventions. This quantitative evidence was reinforced further by the findings of the Ofsted inspection in January and February 2012 which found the same findings.

Chapter 9: Understanding Organisational Transformation Using Co-operative Inquiry

Chapter 9 Understanding Organisational Transformation Using Co-operative Inquiry

1. Introduction

I wrote this Chapter because I wanted to analyse how the implementation of the methodology brought about developments in practice in one local authority using systemic theory. Commentators on organisational transformation concur; 'organisations are difficult to change'. (Seel: 2008: 1). I believe we facilitated an emergent change in workers' behaviour, in their feelings and general psychology towards an entire client group. With this comes accompanying systems change. (See Aims of the Research in Chapter 1).

I have an ambitious agenda for this Chapter. I critically evaluate the process of emergence that developed throughout the life of the inquiry. My motivations; I am curious, I am a practitioner researcher, I want to contribute to the development of social work practice, I am a student of management practice and I want to understand the contribution of the methodology to the change process. I study leadership in context and as a distributed phenomenon across the organisation in the context of this research. I study the exponential iterative non-linear interaction between co-inquirers with systems that affect the process of change throughout the organisation. Finally, I want to understand causality. In this Chapter, I take an organisational perspective; I use complexity, systems and chaos theories to assist in understanding in what Edwards & Gill, (2010: 11), describe as 'the interrelatedness of experience'. (Herbert: 2009 Stacey: 2003).

I analyse process of change, (illustrated in Diagram 9.1), because continuous change characterises organisations and the modern world of work. (Diagram 9.1 depicts, in a chronological illustration, the key characteristics of authority and containment needed for successful organisational change). Understanding change is particularly relevant to organisations like Children's Social Care which strives for a healthy organisational culture which is needed to increase output whilst maintaining quality production at the same time as reducing employee turnover and other counterproductive behaviour. All needed to achieve a performance orientated adaptive organisational culture.

I reflect on the prevailing organisational conditions at the beginning of the inquiry, the manner in which change was introduced and whether it is truly sustainable as the inquiry concluded. I believe the co-operative inquiry, (supported by the other action research activities), became an environment for radical progressive action throughout the organisation. I argue emergent change occurred because people provided the necessary stimulus for authentic and lasting change. I structure this chapter using the original, and further developed, research aims as sub-headings as a method to further evidence how the research aims were achieved in part or in whole. I conclude that the implementation of the

methodology adaptation facilitated emergence and allowed for many theories to co-exist strengthening validity whilst recognising that we ignore the emotional meaning of work at our peril.

2. *Theoretical Underpinnings in Developing a Sustainable Change Process within a Complex Adaptive Organisation*

During the life of the project, I increasingly became interested in process theory also known as 'an organic world view'. (Stacey: 2006: 45). In terms of process, human exchange creates systems such as groups, organisations, cultures and societies. Within these systems individuals are part of the systems they form. Organisations, like Children's Social Care, are living organism. Employing Stacey's (2001: 23) parlance, Children Social Care produces patterns of complex responsive processes containing intricate components meaning; 'it is a highly complex adaptive system operating with other complex adaptive systems'.

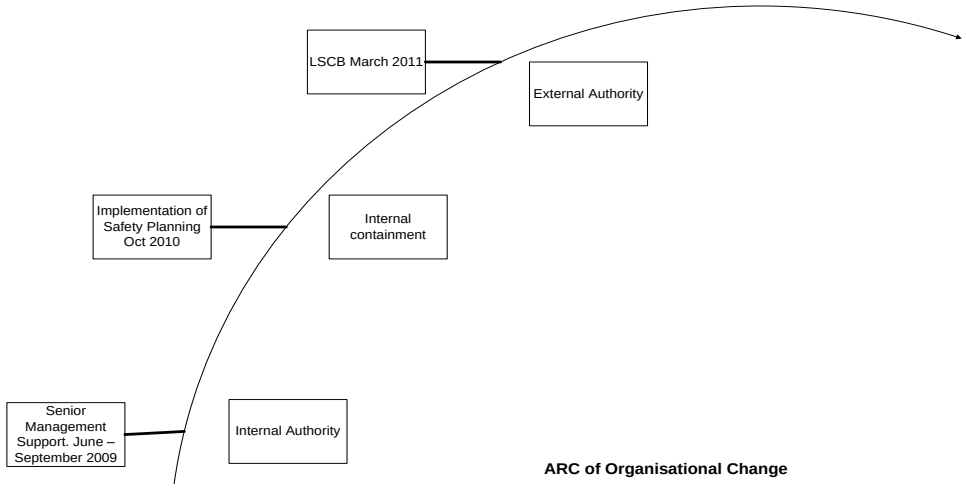


Diagram 9.1 Arc of Organisational Change

According to Stacey (2001: 6); 'Human futures are under perpetual construction through the detail of interactions between human bodies in the living present, namely complex responsive processes'.

Human exchange, operating within these complex systems, define the core technology whilst offering further complexities to complex organisational systems because of human intentionality and unpredictability i.e. the actions of human beings are not governed by rules which they can choose to ignore. Indeed, human exchange defines an organisation.

I am convinced by Seel's (2008) argument; that human systems can exhibit a lot of the components of complex systems particularly rational patterns of behaviour which can

happen from ostensibly random individual interactions. This perspective founded the co-operative inquiry and the concepts of; authority, containment and emergence. (See Diagram: 9.1). (Armstrong, Bazalgette & Hutton: 1994).

Complexity thinking provides a practical means of reflecting upon what actually happens in a collaborative creative endeavour like the co-operative inquiry method used here. Indeed, Richardson (2008) suggests that complexity thinking provides limits to what managers and researchers can know about organisations. Indeed, if there are limits there are limits to what can be achieved in a predetermined way. Indeed, as a group of employees and co-inquirers we had to accept that it is not possible to control a complex system but it was our premise to attempt to influence it. Co-inquirers tested this premise by attempting to facilitate emergence by operating often randomly, (in terms of the organisational system and originating paradigm), but calculatedly from their own 'local patterns of behaviour' developed through the co-inquiry which attempted to influence the organisation's global behaviour. Richardson (2008: 89)

Organisational complexity can be described as the amount of; 'differentiation that exists within different elements constituting the organisation'. (Dooley: 2002: 4). Complexity theory explains that most organisational behaviour is caused by a variety of events occurring over periods of time. Contingency theory explains that organisations become complex as a response adapting to fit environmental complexity. Children's Social Care operates in a highly turbulent, political and highly sensitive environment where change is constant. When there is significant environmental complexity, as with Children's Social Care, the workforce, particularly social workers and supporting managers are persistently bombarded with demands for attention or to solve an emergency, a problem or resolve a crisis. This impacts on the organisation in several ways; social workers and managers become defensive and work to the most narrowest definition of the primary task, the information processing capacity of social workers and managers is minimized as energy and attention is prioritised elsewhere meaning the opportunity for organisational learning is diminished. (See Chapter: 2). The co-operative inquiry, with its clear boundaries, was a unique forum to protect inquirers from this environmental complexity allowing them the mental space to think and the time to learn new skills and problem solve. (Dooley: 2002).

Children's Social Care is complex because of its technological core; child abuse is an emotive subject, individually, and as an entirety it is very hard to understand and control. Equally Children's Social Care is internally highly complex. It has to undertake a variety of core processes, provide a service to highly diverse communities who are often unclear and fearful of its core processes, in an environment of crisis and conflict. To function successfully requires a diverse workforce of highly qualified professionals who all adhere to procedures, methods, and processes whilst using the latest technologies. All this adds to further complexities. (Dooley: 2002).

In order to contend with this complexity the co-operative inquiry, by its nature self-organising, employed a pluralistic strategy and approached the research aims from many directions. This exemplified the action research methodology and research / change strategy.

Early in the life of the co-operative inquiry, co-inquirers participated in a reflective exercise where we attempted to identify the emotional meaning and reality of the organisation for each co-inquirer. We were able to identify risk with the concomitant need to prioritise the need for systems of safety planning to manage the anxieties of staff.

Chaos theory, a closely related partner to complexity theory, supports the explanations of emergent change facilitated by the research inquiry. Change is inherent in biological systems meaning all organisations are constantly changing. Systems perspective advocates for a solution focused approach supported by a continuous process of feedback, resilience and self-organisation, (key aspects of chaos theory), which all allow new practices and systems to emerge. The chaos model proposes that planned change is irrelevant and organisations should respond organically to environmental demands. (Leonard: 2005).

In terms of the project, the role of the co-operative inquiry was to move parts of the organisation to 'the edge of chaos' to facilitate emergence as it became clear the inquiry operated in the shadow system of Children's Social Care (as recommended by Seel: 2008). In moving the organisation to the 'edge of chaos' the co-operative inquiry had to manage five variables or 'attractors'; connectivity, diversity, the flow of information, containment of anxiety and use of power. (See Diagram: 7.1). The role of the co-operative inquiry was to influence, persuade and stimulate each of those attractors. Emergence is also dependent on the amount of energy that is introjected into the system to move the system. The co-operative inquiry became the 'engine for change' providing the energy necessary to influence the system in a stable expanding pattern, (rather than a short spurt of growth). (Armstrong, Bazalgette & Hutton: 1994).

Bringing parts of the organisation to the 'edge of chaos' had an impact on the co-inquiry especially in the first year. For example and, as identified in Chapter 5, there were many detractors to the research with a number of calls to terminate the research. This placed pressure on participants whose anxiety needed to be managed. Other examples of how this impacted on the co-inquiry are:

- Co-inquirers were agents of change and early in the project were associated negatively because the social workforce was resistant to father inclusion. This association was difficult for some co-inquirers especially those who were practitioners within the teams where we were trying to change practice.
- Conversely, and as the project gained notoriety, co-inquirers experienced a positive association especially when they were invited to present their work to Eileen Munro and at a national conference on father engagement.

- Strategically the co-inquiry led to a surprising debate [for many] at executive level within the council over its approach to fathers.

The co-operative inquiry connected co-inquirers with other agents external to the inquiry. It meant the co-inquirers needed to be diverse in terms of their positions in the organisation, their relationships with one another as well as their ethnicities and ages. Anxiety about change was, over time, contained by the inquiry group. Armed with these four variables, the co-operative inquiry could boost and then consistently ensure there were significant amounts of information about including fathers disseminated across the organisation. Although, chaos theory could not be applied directly to the action of the inquirers, (because human action is not deterministic), it has proved useful in understanding unpredictability whilst facilitating emergence. (Stacey: 2003).

The effects of social pressure and information have a propensity to propel staff towards consistent norms, values and practices. Meaning, if including fathers became an organisational norm institutionalised in organisational dialogues then, fathers would be included in practice.

I have also written a great deal about organisational and change processes. Processes consist of multiple events; they are the ordered set of actions, events and process laws which are employed to produce the outputs of an organisation. (There also exists a hierarchy of processes within the organisation). In social work, processes crisscross, and overlap structural hierarchies and boundaries such as departments, department heads and directors. Again this continuous movement defined the pluralist strategy of change in the action research which also had to crisscross systems and process. (Seel: 2008).

This is my theoretical perspective which I apply to critically understand the complexity in developing an approach to include fathers in Children's Social Care.

3. Organisational Prerequisites to encourage transformation in Children Social Care

I describe the organisational prerequisites which were present within the Children Social Care which were needed to bring about transformation. The research took place in a Children's Social Care service which is perceived to have a strong as well as a performance orientated adaptive culture. The majority of staff at all levels considered it as being a healthy organisation as defined by the Education Resource Information Digest, (2011). It operates as a hierarchical bureaucracy and a role culture meaning workers and managers have delegated authorities and responsibilities within a highly defined structure. Predictable and consistent systems exist as a mechanism to manage anxiety and to reduce complexity within the environment smoothing input and output transactions, (i.e. case management processes).

Dialogue is rich and diverse allowing fertile ground for adaptation which harnesses creativity. Morale is high, management have a track record of successful implementation of change and are known for confronting difficult issues. There are numerous communication methods, systems and processes, feedback systems, reporting structures, recognition for good practice and a strategy to recruit people who will function in a thriving self-organising system.

I argue here that this healthy organisational culture supported emergent creativity and provided the foundations and the energy to develop the Breaking down Barriers project. The organisational culture facilitated human exchange. This is the 'vehicle' to encourage emergence. The co-operative inquiry in particular had, as its primary function, to influence the interactions and dialogue within organisational microstates (teams) and the organisational 'paradigm' to facilitate a shift in a sub-culture to include fathers. The organisation is defined by a number of sub-cultures including innovation, 'we can always do better', high standards and quality, learning and support to staff. (This is within a context of re-organisation, a reduction in resources, rationalisation, job insecurity, increasing thresholds to services, a reliance on procedure, an increased demand for services and increasingly complex family circumstances). (Seel: 2005 & 2003).

Critically, in an attempt to manage complexity, work processes and skills and outputs have been standardised. The organisation has been considered, again as identified in the 2010 and 2011 staff survey, as excessively hierarchical which can lead to power domination. Social workers and managers can and do place excessive trust and accountability in authority. Often authority is not questioned. This can stifle creativity and learning. Managers have a history of relying on technical solutions as a form of avoidance.

I now recognise a number of pervasive behaviours were widespread and inescapable during the life of the inquiry. For example; avoidant behaviour was mirrored in the co-operative inquiry, the complexities of our organisational culture were projected into the inquiry and remained a constant influence on the way we performed our roles. This is best demonstrated in our reliance on existing authority structures and our existing roles. Other factors that impeded creativity and innovation in the inquiry included anxiety. Children and family social work is noted to generate anxiety inhibiting creativity, 'habitualisation' is common as actions are frequently repeated and patterns, (like the exclusion of fathers), have developed and been institutionalised.

I posit that the proven efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation provided the research with the foundations for emergence.

4. Establishing Conditions for Emergence; Developing an Alternative Sustainable and Inclusive Conceptual Model to Transformational Management: The Methodology

I needed to 'get the entire system into the room' in order to establish conditions for emergence to include fathers in social work and management practice and systems which I described in Chapter 5. Simultaneously, I recognised I had to rid myself of the 'organisation as a machine' metaphor and use a language of support, facilitation and encouragement. (Seel: 2008).

Facilitating the process of emergence in a fast changing dynamic environment is challenging. Change is non-linear unpredictable and has uncertain outcomes. I quickly learnt that it is crucial to understand change as a constant process. Change will only originate from changes in the relationships between people in the organisation. There are subsequently on-going emergent, cultural and behavioural elements implicated in managing the change process. This reality was highly persuasive as we could anticipate shifts in the external and internal environments. We needed a long-term strategic vision that could be re-evaluated in line with the pace of change in the organisation. Facilitating change is also difficult because historically people do not feel involved or included in the process of change. Participation of interested, empowered people, who are encouraged and enabled, is essential. Co-operative inquiry is an ideal methodology to redress this balance. It is self-organised, it focuses on inquiry and change simultaneously, it is a 'middle out' approach, everyone is involved and asking questions commences the change process; an ideal method to advance sustainable emergent change. (Chapman: 2010, Seel: 2008).

As described in Chapter 3 the Breaking Down Barriers project used a multiple pluralist strategy building solid foundations to facilitate emergence. We created urgency, (throughout the initial research), developed a guiding coalition (the senior management and then the co-operative inquiry), we created a vision for change, communicated that vision empowering change and then spent eighteen months building on the initial change applying constant pressure from every point of the system. Although the co-operative inquiry has come to an end work continues to embed changes via performance management, supervision, strategic planning and other methods. On reflecting on how to facilitate organisational emergence and transformation, I discuss nine key elements within an accepted change management framework designed by Seel (2008) for establishing conditions for emergence:

a. Connectivity

The co-operative inquiry's role was to promote connectivity, increase urgency and identify and extend new interactive patterns within the organisation. The preparatory work; the original research (2009), the action research and the pre and post-test audit were critical as it allowed the research to build connections across the organisation whilst encouraging feedback. The co-inquirers then acted, as informal leaders, distributing further connections, integrating people, crisscrossing the networks throughout the life of the inquiry, (as an application of chaos theory). Co-inquirers modelled and promoted the emergent mind-set in

others, catalysing people's commitment and attempting to maximise the highest contribution from others.

This is known as 'a constructive culture' where co-inquirers were encouraged to work towards their full potential, where motivation, team work and quality were all concepts advanced in and by the group. The preparatory work and the aims and objectives of the inquiry were designed not to concentrate on the negative as this would have inhibited emergence. Interconnectivity was also present in the use of information technology (IT) especially email, accessible information on Council websites, and an evolving e-learning package and improved ICS. Indeed, IT supported the adaption process.

b. *Diversity*

As a measure of emergence we needed to see an increase in diversity so we needed the co-operative inquirers to be a guiding team who were highly diversified and we needed to audit a diverse range of cases. The co-operative inquiry group were recruited to be diverse in terms of skills, position in the hierarchy, ethnicity, culture and gender. The inquiry was truly participative characterised by its legitimacy as it could consider (critique) multiple perspectives (pluralism). A caveat: we also expected to be wrong because understanding is always incomplete. (Richardson: 2008). Diversity was further expanded by having a number of allies and the senior management team on the boundary of the inquiry as described in Chapters 5 to 7).

c. *Rate of Information Flow*

A good communication strategy was essential. Each co-inquirer became a champion of the research aims and was mandated to promote the vision, enabled to interact with specific groups communicating buy-in. For example; each co-inquirer, who was a representative of a social work team, agreed to regularly discuss the inclusion of fathers in team meetings and in group and individual supervision and role model this in practice. Co-inquirers who were team managers did the same as well as interact and role model the inquiry's agenda with their wider networks. We ensured the interactions were of quality and were frequent enabling co-inquirers to enact change. These conversations were crucial as they swirled and dissipated around the organisation building towards creative and adaptive change and feedback. Much work was achieved informally with co-inquirers simply having conversations with colleagues they might not normally have. Co-inquirers were working in a non-linear manner facilitating emergence by 'Breaking Down Barriers' and opening up channels enabling the system to self-organise and move towards the 'edge of chaos'. (Bak: 1997). Communication was also important in the containment of individual and organisational anxiety about the project. (See Diagram: 9.1). The essential concept of containment is what Winnicott (1971: 6) described as 'good-enough communication'. However, communication was inhibited by not always identifying the unconscious processes in the group which I have analysed in Chapters 6 and 7.

d. The Containment of Anxiety

I recognised that the social workers could only cope with a certain amount of anxiety before new defences appeared whilst the older traditional defences returned. As a group, the co-operative inquirers recognised that individual and organisational defences, which we identified in Chapter 2 could potentially perpetuate dysfunctional practices whilst propagating and consolidating defences further.

The co-operative inquiry supported staff and managers to contain anxiety, (as illustrated in Diagram 9.1) for example; by developing a safety planning system, by being mandated by the senior management team and by the LSCB which also modelled cultural change from the top down and middle up. We attempted to face the anxiety 'head on' attempting to interpret and re- interpret behaviours. However the patterns of anxiety avoidance, which were continually represented throughout the life of the project, were often either too sophisticated for us to identify or we were blinded to them because we were so involved in the process. The co-operative inquiry had to contain by developing systems and processes of listening to workers' experiences, reflect upon them and respond transparently. Workers across the system needed to feel heard and understood. It made me question how possible it is to truly contain anxiety when all members of the containing group are members of the originating organisation.

e. Proportionate Power

Power, as identified in Chapter 6 and 7, inhibited the research inquiry. The intention of populating the co-inquiry with a diverse group was based on the pluralist emergent strategy to 'multiply' the vision throughout system. To achieve this we needed representation from across the hierarchy. As an inquiry group we discussed our differences on four occasions. At the beginning of each co-inquiry we reaffirmed that hierarchy was left outside of the room at the start of each inquiry meeting. This was naïve. The power differentials between individual co-inquirers were too great.

Then again, the constant senior management support, (as illustrated in Diagram 9.1), empowered the project's aims and offered access, resources and maintained the inquiry's profile whilst authorising me, mid-project, to start working on the project within my normal working hours simultaneously sanctioning the co-operative inquiry. Approval and support from the LSCB authorised the research inquiry further, (again as illustrated in Diagram 9.1), propelling it into the minds of others outside of the Service allowing us to form a number of leading coalitions advancing the vision whilst empowering others. Senior management support also modelled and promoted the emergent mind-set in others. Senior management authority meant that power flooded the inquiry empowering inquirers. On reflection power is a necessary concept but the co-inquiry should have been more aware of how it influenced the actions of the group. (Harwood: 2011).

f. Identity Maintenance

The co-operative inquirers had many identities throughout the life of the project. It was crucial that the project's aims did not detract or threaten workers' organisational identity. We wanted the inclusion of fathers to be integrated into standard practice, rituals and symbols. For example; it was included in legal planning meetings and child protection conferences and technically the new single assessment framework asked about mothers and fathers. We were able to integrate people and align interdependent systems and processes sustaining conditions for emergence.

g. Good Boundaries

Boundaries had to be constructed and managed throughout the research inquiry's life especially to manage peoples' anxieties. For example; deadlines for project initiatives were met, transparent aims and objectives developed, reviewed and redeveloped and then regularly communicated within the organisation. Most crucially, the co-operative inquiry was a closed system the intention here that there were limits surrounding the inquiry allowing space for creativity and emergence. On reflection, what was particularly useful was providing social workers and the wider organisation with a criteria or boundary when not to include fathers. This boundary (or criteria not to include) encouraged self-organisation and allowed the Children-in-Need Service to adapt by clearly laying down exacting boundaries specifying what is not permissible and then encouraging social workers to experiment within those limits.

To influence the organisation, we had to influence the people who made up the organisation, because if the people would not change then neither would the organisation. Put simply, we needed to create motivation in the organisation. To achieve sustainability we needed to persuade and inspire groups of people at all levels of the hierarchy. This meant the boundary had to be permeable and as a self-organising system we needed connectivity. As Schneider, Brief and Guzzo (1996: 15) remark 'groups are the glue that holds the change effort together'. We had to persuade and prompt the climate and that meant influencing most policies, routines, procedures and processes.

h. Intentionality

Intention is an emergent property brought about, in this case, by the interactions of the co-inquirers and the wider networks which then feeds back into the system and encourages further development and self-renewal. For example; we developed a persuasive vision and then we engaged most workers across the hierarchy. We used case studies to develop our vision and tell new stories of inclusion as talking about cases engages social workers' 'hearts and minds' and encourages participative co-creation i.e. that social workers and managers will retell the story thereby enacting change and encourage learning in a continually evolving and emergent process.

i. Positive Emotional Space Leading to Watchful Anticipation

The co-operative inquiry provided 'a thinking space', allowing a positive emotional experience to develop amongst co-inquirers in order to design the emergence. We extended the co-operative inquiry because we all agreed it was premature to stop thinking together as this would have inhibited emergence. In many ways the project continues as we, in different ways, continue to feed information and influence the organisational culture by engaging in conversations and encouraging dialogue to continue development within the system.

John Horton Conway's 'Game of Life' (1970) became influential in my reflections on the patterns and proliferations of emergence. What I discovered was self-replication; for example; the development of performance indicators led to targets, led to dialogues, emergence, evolution and iteration as one model of father inclusion became redundant as another developed and more managers and groups within the organisation became involved. A constantly growing pattern of inclusion began to self-replicate within Children's Social Care and sequentially external to it.

I became increasingly transfixed by this notion of self-organisation and self-renewal because, I was convinced, this would inevitably facilitate emergence allowing it to propagate throughout the system, in other words; an intelligent and co-operative adjustment to an ever changing context. (Leonard: 2005: 44)

Resistance to new practice and ideas was common place. Initially, the resistance was overt and vocal. However, once the project gathered momentum people spoke less of being against the practice but were still excluding. Anxiety levels were increased because of the inquiry's aims. Social workers were thinking: 'will I be physically or sexually assaulted now?' This generated infantile reactions which affected how co-inquirers were received by their colleagues. To combat resistance we needed the support of senior management whilst developing systems of feedback both of which encouraged new behaviours as we listened to social workers' anxieties and addressed their concerns through the increased security of safety planning.

I have deconstructed the key elements that encourage emergence; I now want to explore the role of the methodology in the process of organisational transformation.

5. Implementing a Co-operative Inquiry Aimed at Increasing the Engagement of Fathers in Children's Social Care.

The co-operative inquiry method was different and radical and generated stimulus throughout the organisation. The co-operative inquiry took place within a complex system allowing us to comprehend its complexity, overcome silo thinking and modifying and re-aligning our aims providing the conditions for emergence. The co-operative inquiry was a behaviour based intervention allowing co-inquirers to customise interventions to the specific culture of the Children-in-Need Service. It allowed us to drive forward change from

a grassroots level. This strategy became more complex as the inquiry evolved and we approached wider systems in Children's Services and the LSCB.

On reflection, the recruitment of co-operative inquirers was fundamental to how we established the conditions for emergence. The inquiry was innovative and so we needed innovative individuals who were prepared to challenge the status quo. They needed to be motivated and interested enough to manage resistance whilst often having to be motivated enough to write new procedures and practices.

The co-operative inquiry was adaptive because there was a continuous process of experimentation, review and a critical system of continuous feedback as explained in Chapter 3. The inquiry developed what Edwards' (2010: 165) terms 'a task culture' which recognises the measure of task complexity especially from the middle of the project when we started to involve external systems. The inquiry's processes meant we became 'a matrix organisation' where we were reporting across the organisation in an attempt to influence the way change emerged. (Stacey: 2006: 89). For instance; when implementing the research methodology we rigorously implemented the validity procedures and the process of divergence and convergence. We adhered to the model of research cycling reflection-action taking-reflection using the four stages to analyse data over an eighteen month period as recommended by Reason & Bradbury (2009). We measured our reflections through group and individual supervision, whilst exploring our findings with wider groups and systems as well as informal discussion on the 'office floor' all of which contributed to unremitting and uninterrupted information flowing around the system.

The co-inquiry was aimed at focusing on inter-subjective meaning (i.e. the co-inquirers and workers individual perspectives). I believe it was the co-operative inquiry particularly its members that were the 'germ' for emergence. The stages of co-operative inquiry exponentially focused on selectively eliminating or disconfirming the less truthful explanations of what was working to include fathers; i.e. falseability. (See Chapter 3). This method of eliminating the less likely causes for change meant advanced methodological rigour and trustworthiness because highly probable knowledge was generated from a process of consecutive elimination. We reduced threats of failure by holding the responsibility for change within the inquiry and we inundated the system with information. It was certainly a very different forum to anything that had gone before.

Each new phase of the co-inquiry added to our understanding and learning. Different people in the group participated differently contributing creatively as the group matured. Non-linear feedback meant we were orientated towards creativity, germinating innovative ideas because the inquiry established a climate of change. The inquiry encouraged cognitive dissonance which led to analysis of what was outmoded which, in turn, led to change.

The action research and the co-operative inquiry invited all types and forms of feedback as the inquiry would only develop through continuous interactions within the system. (Indeed,

feedback is central to emergence and the double loop learning process). For example; we established a Breaking Down Barriers mail box for social workers to write in with cases, dilemmas or difficulties in involving fathers and a newsletter was produced, (although somewhat erratically), by co-inquirers describing the inquiry.

As inquiry members, we often failed to identify what was unsaid in the room. This may have been because the group was not skilled enough in psychodynamic thinking, was too involved in the process or [my hypothesis] that the lack of an independent psychodynamic facilitator inhibited the opening up of new possibilities or identified the repeating and new defensive patterns. This resulted in the co-operative inquiry not repeatedly revaluating resistance to change and not reassessing our relationships inside and outside of the group and not reconsidering power and authority. Three flaws when implementing the method limiting emergence, creativity and the inquiry itself. I wonder what more could have been achieved if these identified limits had been addressed?

6. *Developing My Management Skills*

I drove forward and championed the agenda supporting emergence. My role was to be a process champion of an organisation wide change initiative; I performed as a catalyst and source of continuity. I constructed coalitions amongst the constituent parts which represented most teams and services within the organisation; I presented an influential and convincing vision that unified the co-inquirers as well as many other influential groups. I took a leadership role, modelling best practice whilst also driving forward the vision. If I had not acted in this role the inquiry would not have happened. This has been my conundrum throughout the life of the research inquiry. How to balance my managerial function with that of the co-operative inquiry principles of participation, equality, being an inside researcher and sharing power? (Simon: 2001).

Bolman and Deal (1991) suggest that leaders see change from a number of perspectives; bureaucratically, (structural), politically, (power), human resources (training) and symbolically (identity and meaning). The role of the leader is to support the workers perceive the organisation differently using these perspectives to bring about change.

I now recognise I accepted a more senior management function in working through the complexities of this project. I played a role of 'visionary transformational and transactional leader and inspirational motivator' as well as my day to day managerial and transactional leadership function adding to my multiplicity of roles. (Edwards & Gill: 2010: 19). I created the conditions to establish the project, which in turn, would influence and even change the primary process; i.e. that we would see an increase in the risk assessments of fathers. I defined the process, identified and recruited resources, developed systems and practices and provided leadership all in a manner that would optimise the ability of the organisation to achieve its primary task. My other role was to manage the project in relation to the interaction at the outer boundary of the organisation especially in maintaining the boundary

and, then at the appropriate time, launching the project across the boundary into the wider system leading to co-evolution. On reflection, multiple roles sustained the group but this came at a cost.

7. Transactional and Transformational Leadership: Finding a Middle Ground

I am learning to find a distinction and a balance between transactional and transformation leadership. Children's Social Care in general and child protection work in particular, is highly proceduralised. From a linear viewpoint, transactional leadership ensures:

- Stability
- Co-ordination
- Control
- Results by the effective transaction of protocols, procedures and the implementation of policies between workers, teams, departments and agencies with the reward being safe practice and the achievement of targets and performance indicators.

Transformational leadership, within a whole complex adaptive system, brings about major change through its non-linear structure influencing patterns of behaviour, inspiring workers through personal style, charisma and collaboration. This means that outcomes can also occur through chance. (Boehm & Yoels: 2009, Lawler: 2007). In finding a balance between transactional and transformational styles, I have adopted a distributed style of leadership where I collaborate in co-operative activity sharing tasks within the work group as this style recognises the need for different expertise to complete different tasks, whilst encouraging transformational change.

I was conscious of the language we used in the inquiry as this influenced actions and emergence because culture is the emergent result of conversations. From a social constructionist perspective, and keeping in mind the co-operative inquiry process, 'what people focus on becomes their reality and the language people use creates their reality'. (Seel: 2008 p 8). It was therefore crucial to use positive language during the inquiry as this facilitated inquirers' to construct a positive outlook and future to the project.

8. Understanding Organisational Transformation; Concluding Reflections

I have attempted to 'turn on a new light' and bring about a paradigm shift in the organisation by encouraging others to explore a new area of practice. I believe adopting complexity and chaos thinking provides helpful lenses in order to understand and facilitate emergence in organisations as does psychoanalytical theory. I have discovered that organisations cannot be changed by plan or desire so I have studied emergence in complex systems which has allowed me to reflect on creativity and the conditions to foster emergence. Emergence can materialise in incomprehensible ways. (Stacey: 2006). I have further discovered that there is a greater probability of achieving sustainable change if the

culture that operates in the organisation supports emergent creativity. I also concluded that the organisational history and cultures had great bearing on the findings of the research.

What is equally important in an organisation and change process is the degree of meaningful participation from workers from across the system. This experience clearly evidences that awareness of individual and group unconscious processes promotes communication, learning and transformation.

I concluded that to develop a conceptual model that leads to sustainable transformation in the system in one local authority can best materialise by establishing tightly connected communities of good practice who have the capacity to self-organise; where there is diversity of opinion, and a balance between competition and collaboration based on democratic and egalitarian concepts. This was exactly what we did within the co-operative inquiry. Emergence can also be encouraged by helping people discover new aspects of their culture, by having clear goals, a vision, (told in story form), to stimulate connectivity and information. (Seel: 2008).

I have deduced that a pluralist model of emergence is a successful method to create emergence because I needed to approach this very real problem from multiple directions because it was not possible to simply match a theoretical application that would solve the problem in such a complex multifaceted environment. Secondly, complex systems are continually evolving meaning causality is equally complex, multi-ordered and intricate. This meant I needed to adapt and develop current theoretical models to the changing complexity.

I have attempted to collate my thoughts and actions over how I have understood the implementation of the methodology. I have reflected on the original research questions and concluded that co-operative inquiry, as collaborative methods, offer the very best 'approach to enabling and encouraging emergence in organisations'. (Seal 2008: 9).

Chapter 10: Conclusion

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1. *Introduction*

I evidence that it is possible to increase the engagement of fathers in Children's Social Care. However is in its infancy. This research activity is one of the first known attempts to practically apply the theory of father inclusion to 'front line' children and family social work services. I bring the reader '*a body of knowledge*' and my current deductions, (as I am sure many more will follow in the months and years to come).

In this final chapter, I review the inquiry's aims and theory. I analyse the '*cause and effect*' of the inquiry by correlating research actions and reflections with emergence and conclude by answering the research questions I posited in Chapter 1. I synthesis the many '*outcome patterns*' as I recognise it is simply not possible to; '*capture everything about everything*' [so I have had to make] '*choices in where to focus my efforts*'. (Pawson: 2006: 88). For the benefit of others interested in developing a similar project, I include reflections on what inhibited further research activity. To test whether this collaborative methodology has been successful depends on how well the methodology was implemented, the group it was applied to and what precisely the inquiry was expected to achieve.

We undertook this research to refine further a developing theory, of father inclusion in social work, so the experience and learning could be transferred in a more advanced iteration to other local authorities and welfare organisations.

Thinking in terms of the totality of the outcome Chapter 4 and Appendix 2 evidences many successful outcomes whilst Chapters 6 and 7 identifies many unsuccessful ones detecting the many barriers that limited the research. It is crucial to name these as I want this thesis to act as an empirical guide to colleagues so they may achieve more optimal outcomes.

2. ***Why have Fathers Been Continually Excluded from the Social Work Task?***

We discussed, throughout the co-inquiry that paternal alienation is caused by a range of complex macro and micro variables, (as identified in Chapter 2). The experience of implementing the pre and post-case file audit and the co-operative inquiry upheld this view.

However, what the co-operative inquiry taught me was the pervasive role of gender relations. Establishing and running a co-operative inquiry has led me to argue that as members of society, our individual social constructions of our gendered roles unconsciously determine, in the context of this research, social workers' and organisations' behaviour. I now realise this means fathers are excluded automatically and instinctively. I base this on the research findings but also the experience of the co-operative inquiry which bore witness

to the re-enactment of gendered identities and thus power relations which were palpably present throughout the research.

A cyclical process exists where fathers' gendered identity is polarised meaning fathers are poorly constructed and are ill-prepared for either partnerships or parenthood. Until society recognises this polarisation and goes on to support fathers to contribute equally to the care of infants then both boys' and girls' experience of their identity will continue to be polarised. This polarisation is evident even magnified in social work where we are mandated to work with those who are marginalised and dispossessed. In this context, this means men are either categorised as good or bad instead of acknowledging there can be good in bad men and vice versa. We can further conclude that this polarisation causes Black and ethnic minority fathers, white working class fathers and abusive men to remain undetectable in social work intervention because they are kept separate, often subordinated and marginalised.

The Research Concluded that Fathers have Been Excluded from the Social Work Task because:

- The co-operative inquiry identified that children and family social work is one of the few institutions to confront the perversities and abuses of traditional gender and power relations. Therefore paternal alienation is a response to that male abuse.
- The profession has been blind to father involvement as a defence against hegemonic masculinity, gender and power relations.
- Local authorities have colluded over decades in silence, blind to the abuse caused by men.
- This blindness has been mirrored in government departments, inspections and academic organisation.
- This blindness means abusive men are not held to account, whilst abused woman and children remain at risk, perpetuating the cycle of abuse.
- The blindness will continue to recur risking repeating a pattern of harm to children and women.
- This blindness has contributed to the continued marginalisation of fathers.
- From a financial perspective, local authorities are missing opportunities for children to be placed with fathers or paternal extended families thereby saving millions of pounds a year in foster placement and residential costs.

What has been equally enlightening is how the anxiety generated in working with fathers displaces and supersedes the inherent anxiety about the safety and welfare of the child and the associated professional accountabilities. My hypothesis is Children's Social Care departments operate complex defences to exclude fathers because social workers fear engaging fathers and fear engaging male abusers. Therefore social workers and managers are able to provide highly defendable reasons why the father cannot be engaged. For example; he is in prison, the mother will not disclose his identity, I don't have the time or he is violent.

These sophisticated defences have, in the form of evolving defendable reasoning, infiltrated, over the decades, management and the wider organisational system so there now exists a collective entrenched justification as to why fathers are excluded. This is despite a legal duty to include fathers, clear evidence from hundreds of serious case reviews that engaging fathers will prevent or certainly reduce the numbers of child deaths and the daily experience of working with the survivors of male abuse and violence. It can be genuinely argued that these defences are endemic, highly potent and operate unconsciously across the entire Children Social Care system.

3. How do we Currently Exclude Fathers from Social Work Practice?

Chapter 2 provided the evidence to claim that we exclude fathers by being blinded to their presence. The implementation and findings of this research corroborates this claim. The pre-case file audit clearly evidenced that fathers were not included in referrals, assessments and interventions.

This was substantiated by the retrospective data on father involved recorded from ICS and the early work of the co-operative inquiry. (See Chapters 6 and 7). These data gathering exercises coupled with the co-inquirers' actions and reports (See Chapters 6 and 7) validate the statement that: as a profession, we are not trained to work with fathers or abusers and we do not understand masculinity. Discourses drawn from the co-operative inquiry supports the argument that social workers are not given the appropriate resources or services to work with fathers nor are they supported practically and emotionally to work with abusers or violent men. (I find this quite unbelievable when we consider we are attempting to resolve abuse and yet we do not confront the cause of that abuse). Paternal alienation is most palpable in the failure by all agencies to address the epidemic scale of domestic violence. Again evidenced by Chapter 2 and substantiated by the co-operative inquiry, local authorities have failed to recognise the importance of gearing their strategies to combat domestic violence, a crime which affects between 60% to 80% of all allocated cases in social work.

The literature review identified that models to intervene with perpetrators are under-developed perpetrator programmes are embryonic, expensive and difficult to access. The work of the co-inquiry discovered that services fail to take account of fathers' needs and are poorly organised. Chapter 2, verified by the activities of the co-operative inquiry in Chapters 6 and 7, documents that social workers are not trained or supported to engage with perpetrators meaning their [fathers] abusive behaviour goes unaddressed ironically giving them tacit permission to keep abusing. This is a shame on us all. My intention is that this research will act, in a small way, as '*a call to arms*' and immediately galvanize others to address this shame.

The discourses identified via the co-operative inquiry confirm that we [social work management] need to improve how we recognise and contain the emotional impact of working with male abuse. Supervision should be a place where social workers could speak of their fear of engaging fathers but a silence has operated to prevent these discussions. The literature review documents, (validated by the experience of the co-operative inquiry), that for supervision to be effective in the management of male abuse then social workers and their supervisors need to take account of the power of projection, transference and counter transference and name their fear.

Chapter 2 and the co-operative inquiry in Chapters 6 and 7 have identified a range of complex reasons why fathers are excluded. The experience of establishing and participating in the co-operative inquiry supports the thesis that power and gender relations operate, often unconsciously, in every interaction between people. This was clearly evident throughout the research, (see Chapters 6 and 7), contributing significantly to limiting and varying the application of the methodology. Despite this the learning has been astronomical because variation is not happenstance but intrinsic. (Pawson: 2006). On the surface; the Pre and Post Comparison Case File Audit documents, (see Chapter 8), that the co-operative inquiry increased the engagement of fathers in Children Social Care in the following ways:

A Summary of the research findings from the Pre-and Post-Case-File Audit Triangulated with ICS

- The 'Pre' audit identified that fathers were recorded on 56% of case files. When the co-inquiry concluded the figure had risen to 83%.
- 71% of cases had a named father in 2009 and this increased to 86% by 2012
- The number of fathers invited per 100 conferences has risen since the start of the co-operative inquiry and continued throughout the life of the research.
- At the start of the co-inquiry fathers attended 8% of LAC reviews. When the project concluded this figure had risen to 24%

- In 2009 only 22% of fathers had parental responsibility recorded on ICS. By 2012 this had increased to 51%
- 90% of the cases, where the fathers' details were recorded, it was also recorded whether he was having contact
- There has been a 29% increase in fathers involved in assessments.
- Fathers are assessed in 57% of all assessments an improvement from 15% before the research commenced
- The audit indicated that there has been a 64% in social workers' considering the father's situation in ongoing planning for the child
- This is further confirmed when we triangulated the pre and case file audit analysis with the performance data generated from ICS that informed us of a 33% increase in fathers names recorded, a 29% increase in fathers with parental responsibility, a 29% increase in fathers involved in assessments with a 42% increase in fathers being invited to attend meetings from 2009 – 2012.

These findings are further supported by OFSTED:

OFSTED Found

'Voluntary and community sector organisations see the council as a highly valued partner that works openly and effectively with them. Including; in relation to different aspects of commissioning involving needs analysis, service specification and procurement. These outstanding links have enabled delivery of services by voluntary and community sector organisations in line with agreed priorities and have bought improvements such as the increased involvement of young fathers with children centres. (P8).

'The LSCB makes very good use of audit to satisfy itself of safeguarding performance across the partnership. It monitors closely progress against priorities and the implementation of relevant action plans and these are continually reviewed and revised to ensure effective safeguarding services are in place across the partnership. Examples include the need to improve engagement with fathers has been identified and communicated to a range of agencies, and in consequence there has been an increase in assessments involving fathers and in the number of children placed with their fathers or with paternal extended families'. (P18).

This is evidence that by using; '*a system as a whole*' and participatory perspectives it is possible to assess abusive men whilst including fathers in social work interventions.

Participation is best evidenced in the use of the co-operative inquiry model which, I evidence by the co-inquirers responses to the final questionnaires, led to greater empowerment of social workers. This is a fundamental finding because research argues that; empowerment is the greatest contribution to the effectiveness of social workers. (Boehm & Yoels: 2009). It is clear to me that we must develop a social work workforce that is highly knowledgeable and skilled, competent and therefore more confident and determined to assess and intervene with fathers. From a management perspective; I believe professional development and empowerment are the leading components in organisational effectiveness and I have proven that co-operative inquiry is a method to achieve this professional development, empowerment and subsequently the inclusion of fathers, (although it could have been another complex area of practice development). (Boehm & Yoels: 2009).

4. ***Is it Possible to Create the Conditions, in One Local Authority, for Fathers to be Included in Social Work Practice? If so, how****?*

Unambiguously, I argue the co-operative inquiry created the conditions for a change in social work practice. I believe that application of this methodology, as evident in the pages of this thesis, has demonstrated an applied logic of creative inquiry whilst possessing roots in practice and the values of science and social science. This has left us, as participant inquirers, confident in the findings I present here. I have also employed an '*open-door*' policy using the multiple perspectives of other practitioners and academics. I have drawn on critical and conceptual literature and practical experience to explain what works for who and in what circumstance. I had tried to learn from diversity although I accept there were on-going attempts to control research outcomes to prevent failure and maintain dominance.

To create the conditions for inclusion; we adopted two strategies; a 'system as a whole approach' where practitioners were constantly consulted and involved, as were others up and down the hierarchy, as 'fallible experts'. This implemented the principal of a learning organisation. Secondly; the function of this thesis has been to evaluate and deliver what Pawson describes as; 'conditional truths' (2006: 98). This is achieved by unearthing the causal and principal contexts and mechanisms that create the conditions for paternal involvement.

In taking these two approaches, I can conclude that there is '*no one size fits*' all approach to social work and the inclusion of fathers. Each Children's Social Care Service, in every local authority, needs to design a bespoke plan contingent on the characteristics, circumstances and culture within their own organisations. (Pawson: 2006).

This is why, to some degree, the research has been successful because it has recognised more complex causal chains and has subsequently identified and analysed complexity and

complex outcome patterns that brought about practice change. For example; we established that power relations were operating covertly in the co-operative inquiry. This was a causal connection and an outcome pattern. Therefore, we now know that to involve fathers we need to recognise and repeatedly and openly discuss how inequality, power and our individual social constructions influence our thinking. Only then will these conversations encourage an organisational sub-cultural shift and a behavioural change and give people permission to discuss their innermost fears.

Returning to the research question; in creating the conditions for change we employed a systemic approach. The inquiry had a broad appeal as the research topic affects all social workers. This bestowed the project with potential longevity whilst the collaborative nature of the project gave inquirers the capacity to accommodate different ideologies. We adapted our research and our strategies allowing for it to fit into every level and 'cog' of the functioning system of Children Social Care exploiting every chance to maximise the research opportunity. For example; we had '*change agents*' also termed' *father inclusive champions*' positioned across the organisation. We encouraged a '*sub-cultural shift*' within the organisation's culture to allow social workers and managers to have conversations about fathers and fear. (Heron: 1996: 145).

This occurred through a commitment to the principles of Peter Senge's (1990) learning organisation particularly through co-operative inquiry which is a proven method to develop practice and empower workers. (Smith: 2001). Further examples of this systemic approach include; co-inquirers served on other project initiatives, worked in child protection conference, case reviews and supervisions advancing the research aims, testing and re-testing new practice. Whilst others met with senior representatives from health, law enforcement and other strategic groups all helping to develop ways to integrate this study into the fabric of the organisation.

In part it is crucial to note that the research achieved a level of transformation because it took place within the correct conditions. The infrastructure of the organisation is frequently modernized and the operating systems are continually updated. There is a commitment to engaging with all workers across the hierarchy. These attributes provided solid foundations for the project.

The organisation has a particular culture that emanated throughout the co-inquiry as we, unconsciously, duplicated the '*cultural way of doing and being*' in the inquiry. (Gaventa and Cornwall 2009: 56). In order to assimilate the inquiry functioned and mirrored this culture. This developed, what Gaventa and Cornwall (2009: 58) describe as, '*a mobilisation of biases*' in favour of a certain type of exploration whilst suppressing other forms of reflection. As I identified in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, this meant some topics were included in discussion whilst others were '*organised out*'. By assimilating to the organisational culture the inquiry achieved much, but it failed to be truly reflexive and missed further opportunities to advance father inclusion.

Creating partnerships with the Family Rights Group and the Fatherhood Institute, (as national champions of father inclusion), likewise with Respect and the Domestic Violence Intervention Project, (as national champions in work with perpetrators of domestic violence), proved pivotal in creating the conditions for father inclusion. These 'independents' offered, in different ways, expertise, resources and insight in achieving the research's aims. I networked and developed meaningful professional relationships with the leading academics in this field particularly; Adrianne Burgess, Professor Brid Featherstone, Cathy Ashley and Jonathan Scourfield. They contributed their knowledge and experience to the research. (Although, I do recognise that I unconsciously invited them to join to legitimise and support the research when I was faced with considerable resistance from some sections within Children's Services). The combination of these perspectives, theories, methods, strategies and allies leads me to argue that this thesis is a well-founded and evidence based hypothesis that;

Fathers can be included in social work assessments and interventions under the following conditions:

- There is a whole system approach.
- We identify and then continually re-identify how covert power and gender relations influence our behaviour in practice. (I would also argue that we need to identify and then continually re-identify how covert race, sex and class relations influence our behaviour in practice).
- We are all open to learning and be ready to act on that learning.
- Social workers and managers, throughout the organisation, collaborate in developing practice by challenging the blindness and silence through regular dialogue about the challenges of father inclusion.
- Social workers' anxieties are contained.
- Social workers and managers are given permission to be afraid and describe the fear preferably in supervision.
- Senior management authorise staff to focus on this activity.
- Data over father inclusion is collected and targets set.
- A senior manager leads a long-term collaborative project. The same senior manager is offered psychoanalytical supervision.
- There is a long-term, (ten to fifteen years), strategic commitment and a realignment of resources to meaningfully address domestic violence.

The Breaking Down Barriers Inquiry was integrated, over time, into the life of the organisation. We had to involve everyone in the service. This was essential for sustainability. Breaking Down Barriers Inquiry became a well-known nomenclature across the organisation, its work could be found across the service and its members were a common sight, (and sound), across the organisation. For example; newsletters, emails and other publicity was sent around the service with Breaking Down Barriers Inquiry as the header. Breaking Down Barriers Inquiry had authority and gave permission to others to talk about fathers. Staff across the Children in Need Service located co-operative inquirers in the context of father inclusion as did each co-inquirer of one another. In turn, senior managers from across Children's Services and the Local Safeguarding Children Board associated me with father inclusion and this supported further project integration. (Dartington: 2000).

We recruited a group of co-inquirers who were motivated, committed and faithful to the task and all played a pivotal role co-operating across the organisation to advance the inquiry's aims.

I have discovered that co-operative inquiry is an important tool within the 'social work tool bag' and should become an integral part of the Child in Need and child protection system in the UK as it is a methodology to assist us recognise defensive behaviours. This will encourage managers to foster an environment that stimulates creativity, inventiveness and enterprise from within. Co-operative inquiry should be used to analyse practice difficulties, in other areas of social work as well as be used to consider wider barriers such as racism.

5. What Strategies, Methods and Techniques Appear to Promote Inclusive Practice for Fathers?

The recommendations from the Fatherhood Institute, in how to create an organisation that is father inclusive, proved to be a crucial framework to develop '*a whole system approach*' to father inclusion. In retrospective this thesis tells the story of how these seven strategic aims were implemented and this and the activities of the co-operative inquirers developed methods and techniques to promote inclusive practice. In terms of the seven;

1. Create and adopt a fatherhood strategy for the Children-in-Need Service and related services with realistic goals and targets. This should include a policy for communicating with fathers and an explicit code of practice for dealing with fathers and male carers. This strategy should be communicated and discussed with all staff and visible for families.

In this thesis Chapter 4 and Appendix 2 provides the evidence to demonstrate this was attained. For example; a Paternal Pledge was written that identified how fathers were communicated to and described the type of service they could expect. (See Appendix 5). The Pledge was circulated and implemented via the co-operative inquiry, a communication

strategy, training and audit across the organisation. The Pledge was added to the Council's website and was the basis of an Inclusive Fatherhood Strategy that was written and agreed by the Children's Services Director and the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

The Children's Services Director requested that the co-operative inquiry draft a fatherhood strategy which essentially was the Fatherhood Institute's seven aims which became the strategic goals.

2. Identify objectives for engagement with fathers as a whole agency/ies, individual services and individual staff, with these objectives being discussed in supervision and appraisal systems as well as being used for performance management.

We identified a set of basic expectations and targets in social work practice that became a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Chapter 7 provides an example of these KPIs and demonstrates their use in practice. The case file audit document was altered to include questions of father engagement. Father engagement became a strategic aim for the service for three consecutive years. This included the aim to include fathers in practice in all social workers' appraisals for two consecutive years. Whilst in managers' appraisals there was an expectation that discussion on father engagement (resistance, fears and barriers) were regularly undertaken. Chapter 4 and Appendix 2 provides evidence of how these and other objectives surrounding the strategic engagement of fathers was achieved.

3. Refine the existing referral and assessment process and the accompanying paperwork to ensure that fathers' data is collected explicitly, systematically and accurately.

As identified in Chapter 4 and Appendix 2 significant amount of work was undertaken with the 'front door'. The CAF (common assessment framework) and the referral form on ICS were redesigned to include questions about the fathers' details. Social workers and administrators were all trained to ask all referrers for details of the father. The 6 monthly audit of threshold decisions was redesigned to include questions about father engagement.

4. Use data collection system/s to regularly assess patterns of use in services, and identify areas where fathers are not being included to focus communication and services.

Data generated from the co-operative inquiry, the case file audits and the KPIs, designed within the co-operative inquiry, were shared with the senior and middle management teams. These KPIs were then included into the monthly Local Performance Indicator Report and regularly discussed throughout the organisation. This was an important milestone in terms of sustainability as well as an acknowledgement of the importance of father engagement throughout the organisation. (See Chapter 4 and Appendix 2).

5. Ensure that training is available for staff at every level of the organisation/s in father-inclusive practice. This will ensure that father-inclusive practice becomes embedded in all levels of work and not reliant on the commitment of targeted services or committed individuals within teams.

Chapter 4 and Appendix 2 provides, within the chronology, several dates where different groups of social workers were trained in father inclusion practice.

The training programme was designed by two co-inquirers with input from a range of others and coordinated by the training department. 95% of social workers and managers from the Children in Need Service were trained along with the majority of support services.

All the training was quality assured, via a survey, and this informed us that some social workers were not aware of the need to safety plan, that there was a demand for a perpetrator programme and managers' supervision needed to be reflective to support social workers identify why they may not wish to identify the father.

Following this intensive training a managers' supervision training was commissioned focused solely on reflective supervision. A fatherhood training programme was also included on the annual social work and managers training syllabus, on the induction programme for all new starters and on the Newly Qualified Social Workers Programme. However we were not able to establish funding for a perpetrator programme but the 'Caring Dads' activities continued.

6. Establish better pathways and referral processes between generic "preventative" provision including Children's Centres and related services and "crisis" intervention services such as CIN. This could enable vulnerable fathers to be identified and supported earlier.

Colleagues from Early Years Services and from other 'Tier 2' preventative services were offered similar training as above. Whilst managers from these services were encouraged to implement the research aims. Chapter 4 evidences this strategy proved effective. For example; Midwifery services commissioned a specific six hour 'Expectant Fathers Programme' which was run from different children centres across the borough on a Saturday. A further example; the Family Nurse Partnership, all staff were trained in father engagement, the partnership fully adopted the 'Seven Aims'. A further example was in the redesign of preventative services following the 'Troubled Family' initiative. All newly designed services and commissioned providers were expected (contractually) to adopt and implement the 'Seven Aims'.

Likewise all social work training programmes were reviewed and all newly commissioned training activities were expected to include the engagement of fathers (e.g. domestic abuse training, assessment training and the application of different theoretical applications). The borough successfully campaigned for funding from the charity; Working with Men who

supplied a fathers' worker for three years who supported the implementation of the Seven Aims across all tier 2 services. With the support of a number of children centre managers representatives from the Children in Need service was able to stage four Caring Dads Programmes.

7. Ensure appropriate focused and gender specific information is available to give fathers antenatally and subsequently. This information, publicity and communication should state "mother, fathers and other carers.

Colleagues in Early Years Services published pamphlets on their support to fathers including details of Saturday activities, as well as the expectant fathers' course and another fathers' course entitled '*hit the ground crawling*'. The Children Service Information manager collected information about all father related activity and services regularly updating the Council's website. The link to which was then regularly sent to social workers and others so staff were aware of services.

6. Why am I Doing this Research? What is the Connection Between the Personal, Professional and Managerial Self and What was the Impetus to Initiate and Complete this Project?

I completed this research because of the stimuli of traditional masculine influences and behaviours. Pragmatically, there is increasing competition for senior managerial positions in social work and, in my desire to provide and compete; I drove myself to complete this work. I also have a narcissistic need to be perceived as successful and this need is gratified by completing such a challenging task as this.

A further component within my motivation has been my desire for professional development. I am hungry for knowledge as I want to be the very best social worker I can be as well as advance social work knowledge within the profession. This hunger is driven by my need to impress my father with my professional and academic accomplishments but also to have greater understanding of my childhood experiences. For example; I continue to repair my own relationships. This research has also left me having greater admiration for my mother, whilst achieving greater insight into my own mind.

Connecting the my personal context I identified in Chapter 1 with my professional self, I recognise this research, in one respect, has gone some way to gratify my own '*father hunger*' whilst allowing me to enhance my leadership and management capacities. This means I am less defensive empowering me to become more of an egalitarian manager as I now possess a greater awareness of the constant covert power struggles that take place around us and in us.

Constructively, this personal reparation has been transposed into my professional 'self' where I find myself promoting the need to repair the relationships between social workers and fathers and their families as well as encourage fathers to repair their relationships with

their children, partners or former partners. Connecting further the personal, professional and managerial 'self', I am now able to understand that my capacity to learn and provide a mature, resilient, containing, non-reactionary management style, is largely based on healthy early childhood experiences. I now know that I am able to rework these early childhood experiences, (as I did in the sophisticated triangulated relationship in my supervisions), to allow me to relate to social structures such as the co-operative inquiry process and manage uncertainty maintaining a depressive position. I also now understand how the Oedipal triangular relationship between my parents and I continues to shape my adult and institutional life. Understanding this allows me to support colleagues' development whilst addressing professional conflicts and splits.

Staying with the personal, professional and managerial dyad; I have completed this research to develop my sense of self within my management role. I am now aware of the unconscious re-enactment of male domination and why I need to control. I have greater insight into my own masculine social construction and the power of paternalism which I find readily coming to the surface of my mind and behaviours. I am changing how I understand my own masculinity by attempting to;

i. Discard controlling behaviours and language that contributes to power difference.
ii. By being more people centred.
iii. By developing new insights in how to influence organisational behaviours.
iv. By having greater awareness of the insidious and pervasive nature of power relations. I am now confident to name it in professional relationships, supervisions and group activities.
v. By having greater awareness of the impact of traditional power relations on myself and others because of my analysis of my own controlling behaviour throughout the co-operative inquiry.

Further Research

During the course of this research inquiry I have identified a number of other research questions which I encourage others to consider:

1. The learning from this research needs to be applied to other local authorities with different organisational and political cultures to further develop the theory of father inclusion.
2. The role of racism, classism, sexuality, Muslim and non-residential fathers in developing an approach to including fathers in social work practice.
3. How do we intervene to stop domestic violence in children and family social work?
4. The impact of domestic violence treatment programmes for perpetrators and what ingredients make for success?
5. The perspectives and needs of minority fathers.

6. The role sex and sexuality plays in social work.
7. Immigration and fatherhood.

7. ***Application of Research to Practice***

I will give this information as freely as possible. I will open a dialogue with those who took part in the research and with social workers and managers in general as recommended by Potter & Wetherall (1978) as further validating the research methodology.

Conclusion

In 2009 there was a special edition of Child Maltreatment dedicated to fathers and maltreatment. Dubowitz: Lee, Bellamy & Guterman: (2009), called for further research on father engagement in services. Ashley *et al* (2011) provided local authorities with recommendations over how to go about this. We accepted this call and fellow researchers' recommendations and implemented a project. We have discovered much but I recognise father inclusion in social work remains in an embryonic stage.

For fathers to be included local authorities, (supported by government departments and academic institutions), need to recognise paternal alienation and prioritise, over the long-term, father inclusion. A problematic request due to the competing and ever changing demands placed on local authority Children's Services. I believe it will take a decade of concerted effort before father inclusion, in social work practice, is the norm and only if we address the litany of issues described in this thesis.

Subsequently, we need to keep striving for more knowledge to develop real evidence based practices. For example; fathers are not a homogeneous group and so more research and consideration needs to be given to non-residential fathers and fathers from Black and other ethnic minorities as well as Muslim fathers. As I have identified, it will take much longer to achieve a permanent cultural shift, however this research activity demonstrates; it is possible to include a greater number of fathers in social work interventions.

It is incumbent on all social workers and managers to include fathers in social work interventions to reduce risks to children. It is further incumbent on us to try, in whatever way we can, to explore alternative, creative and evolutionary practices in an attempt to intervene in families' lives in more supportive, negotiated, sophisticated and less confrontational and compulsive interventions. It is further incumbent on us to hold men to account for their violence and abuse whilst supporting children to have positive non-abusive relationships with their fathers. Co-operative inquiry is a methodology that can support these aims. I conclude by a 'call to arms'. Please consider your experiences and assumptions about fathers and ask yourself how you can better include fathers in your work.

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Glossary & References

Glossary of Terms

Children's Services: Children's Services is an umbrella term to encompass all services provided by the local authority to children. The principle behind the term is that services and the management of those services cut through the normal boundaries of professionalisms and budgets. For example, in the London Borough where the research took place, a system of integrated management exists in children's services between health and the local authority. Children's Services includes; Education, Targeted Youth Services, (gang prevention, crime prevention, youth clubs), Youth Offending, Education Welfare Services, Early Years Services, Children's Social Care, Universal Health Services and some elements of Housing Services.

Children's Social Care: The Children's Social Care system is provided in the UK through Local Authorities via the Children Act 1989 and 2004. Children's Social Care is a Local Authority department with responsibility for assessing the needs of and providing support to vulnerable children in the community in line with statutory law and government guidance. Children's Social Care has a duty to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children and young people. It provides services to children and young people assessed as being 'in need' for a variety of reasons, such as those:

i. *At risk of neglect or abuse (including domestic abuse);*
ii. *Living in families experiencing acute stress;*
iii. *With mental health problems;*
iv. *Whose parents are ill, disabled, learning disabled, mentally ill or substance misusing;*
v. *With caring responsibilities; and those looked after by the Local Authority (LA).*

All these vulnerable children and young people have unique experiences and circumstances, which must be taken into account when providing services. Children's Social Care works in partnership with them and their families to improve outcomes. (See Appendices 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4 for comprehensive details of Children's Social Care).

Children in Need Service: is a service within the wider Children's Social Care. The Children in Need Service employs over one hundred and twenty staff including eighty social work practitioners. These social workers provide services through Section 17, (child in need), Section 47, (child protection) and Section 31, (care proceedings) of the Children Act 1989.

Complexity: There are many definitions of complexity; here is a flavour; 'a system that is complex, in the sense that a great many independent agents are interacting with each other in a great many ways …. To: 'complexity is not located at a specific, identifiable site in a system. Because complexity results from the interaction between the components of the system, complexity is manifested at the level of the system itself. There is neither something at a level below (a source), nor at a level above (a meta-description), capable of capturing

the essence of complexity'. (Seel: 2008 p1 - 2 quoting Waldrop: 1993: 11 and Cillers 1998: 2-3). Complexity theory can be thought of using software programs such as Microsoft Excel which are known as cellular automata and demonstrate that uncomplicated interactions between uncomplicated agents could produce unexpectedly and unpredictably complex behaviour. (Seel: 2006). Crucially and with relevance to the theoretical position of the research self-organisation and emergence are defining features of complexity systems.

Defence: We all have defences[1]. Defences are both conscious and unconscious. Quoting Colman: 'More generally it [defences] is a pattern of feeling, thought or behaviour arising in response to a perception of psychic danger, enabling a person to avoid conscious awareness or conflicts or anxiety arousing ideas or wishes'. (Trevithick & Wengraf; 2011 p 391). However, defences can also provide us with the ability to misrepresent our perception of reality. Denial is a common form of defence allowing us to reject or block out an external reality that involves denying a painful or threatening experience or a denial of part of the 'self'. (Trevithick & Wengraf; 2011).

Deputy Team Managers; supervise up to five social workers ensuring that care plans, child protection plans and child in need plans are achieved within timescales. They are responsible for developing quality and high standards of work.

Domestic Violence: I turn to Respect's opening statement to define domestic violence: 'Men's violence towards partners can include physical, sexual, emotional and other forms of abuse [which escalates in frequency and severity over time]. It is a direct consequence of a fundamental structural inequality in the relationship between men and women rooted in the patriarchal traditions that engender men's belief in the need to secure and maintain power and control over their partners. From this perspective, men's violence is defined as learned and intentional behaviour rather than the consequence of individual pathology, stress, alcohol abuse or a dysfunctional relationship'. (Blacklock: 2011, p 9).

Father; A father is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as; a male parent or individual progenitor of human offspring. The verb "to father" means to produce a child. Fathers determine the gender of their child. Traditionally, fathers act in a protective, supportive and responsible way towards their children. Involved fathers offer developmentally specific benefits for children throughout their lives whilst active father figures may play a role in ameliorating behavioural and emotional difficulties. For example, a good quality attachment to a mother and father may help to increase a child's social stability, educational attainment whilst maintaining emotionally stable relationships in adult life. In the situational specifics of social work and the context of this research, a father does not always have to be a child's biological father. Step-fathers, adoptive fathers, non-residential fathers, 'mother's boyfriend' or 'partner' may also offer nurture or play a role in the child's life and so I use the generic term father to encapsulate all of the different family and care arrangements which confront social workers.

Feminism: There is no universal feminist perspective; feminism is fluid, hence the term feminism. Likewise, there is no single method or theoretical foundation for feminist scholars as contradictory perspectives result from competing explanations of women's oppressions. I have subsequently turned to Maguire (2009) who explains that women, no matter their ethnicity, age, health, sexuality or class experience; 'forms or webs of oppression', devaluation and exploitation and, with multiple identities comes, multiple oppressions. Maguire (2009, p 61) argues that: 'feminism requires a commitment to expose and challenge the web of forces that cause and sustain all and any form of oppression, for both our sisters and brothers, our daughters and sons.' In the context of this thesis the methodology needed to be grounded in feminism; however as a man I note I cannot take a feminist position so I mirror Jukes (1999) and observe.

Inclusion: is a complex subject. At its simplest inclusion means the act or including the feeling of inclusion. (Oxford English Dictionary: 1986). Whilst others posit that inclusion involves a collection of attitudes, relationships and behaviours. For example, inclusion has to include openness to assistance, a perception that there is a benefit in co-operation, good communication, mutuality and investment. Research indicates that social workers assume that the parents who work with them are 'included' although conversely parents' report, who are working with social workers, they do not feel included. In the context of the research questions inclusion means the actions taken as part of this research to include fathers within the activity of children and family social work practice. (Hahn et al: 2011).

Integrated Children System: is the electronic child's record and was first outlined in Learning Lessons (DOH 2000) and contains multiple policy aspirations. The New Labour Party was committed to a major reform and modernisation programme of Children's Services to improve the quality of services and establish confidence by what Cooper & Lousada (2005) describe as 'anxiously regulating' practice and the outcomes for children. (Shaw et al; 2009, Burton & van den Broek; 2009 Cleaver, H et al; 2007).

ICS 'lies at the heart of statutory child care practice in England and Wales' and applies to all children defined as 'in need' as well as subject to child protection plans and children who are 'Looked After'. (Shaw et al; p40; 2009). The work is processed systematically, sequentially, is readable, auditable, transparent and underpinned by a formal model of domains, exemplars and dimensions set out in the Assessment Framework, the Looked After Children systems and data and process models, (DOH 2003b and 2003c), which are all part of the core requirement of Children's Services and drives evidence based practice. ICS provides a 'conceptual framework' introducing a common language, a framework to analyse and plan interventions and information sharing promoting earlier intervention. ICS offers an accessible and accountable platform for social workers and managers to undertake and support the primary tasks of assessment of risk, intervention, planning and review within a 'workflow' system.

ICS enables the development of performance management systems to effectively and competitively monitor progress and planning of cases through audit, quality assurance processes as well as measuring intervention and outcome by performance targets. ICS attempts to reduce variability in practice and thereby human error. Strategically, ICS's ability to collect aggregated statistical profiles allows managers to plan and commission for service delivery, marshal resources towards frontline application and report local and national indicator sets as well as evidence for audit and inspections (Shaw et al; 2009, White et al; 2009 and DCSF 2008).

The Local Safeguarding Children's Board: is an independently chaired statutory meeting involving a group of senior representatives from statutory and voluntary organisations whose role is to analyse situational or institutional issues that either cause or ameliorate risks to children in the borough. The Local Safeguarding Children's Board is also responsible for implementing the recommendations for any serious case review that is required in the borough. Those attending include senior managers from: Health (including the Director of Universal Health Services, the lead paediatrician for child protection, the lead nurses for child protection from both hospitals, Probation, the voluntary sector, Education Welfare, Schools, Early Years, the Director of Children's Services, the Police Borough Commander, Director of Child Protection and Quality Assurance Children Social Care.

Newly Qualified Social Worker: (NQSW) is quite simply a social worker who has recently qualified, (within the last 12 months), and must undertake a set of Post Registration Training and Learning Requirements to assist them to consolidate their social work skills, knowledge and values at the start of their career.

Prejudice: is an unjustified or incorrect attitude, (usually negative), towards an individual based entirely on the individual's membership of a social group. (**Discrimination**: is the behaviour or actions, [again usually negative], towards an individual or a group based on their difference i.e. gender, ethnicity, and or class).

Process: 'A process is something which is going on. It involves the changing of something into something else. It is dynamic and it usually produces an outcome which is different from what existed at the point it was first applied'. (Douglas: 2000 p 66).

Realist Social Construction: is a theoretical position I refer to throughout this dissertation. Essentially, realist social constructionist theory posits that alternatives realities exist. 'There is no true reality as understanding and knowledge is a result of an active, co-operative enterprise of persons in relationships'. (Seel: 2008 p 4) There is no one definition of realist social construction, how could there be? To say something is socially constructed is to emphasise its dependence on contingent aspects of our social lives. i.e. it could not have existed if we have not built it. Therefore, there is no one true reality because reality is constructed through personal interactions meaning multiple socially constructed realities exist as do multiple identities.

We need multiple identities to interpret and understand our constantly changing reality which are interpreted through the power of language which organises meanings and signifies who holds power. Thus reality is created by a social process and preserved by social processes. Child abuse, social work, and the exclusion of fathers from social work are all socially constructed concepts based upon particular beliefs within our society i.e. that children are being abused, that we need social work to protect those children and we need to include fathers to protect children. (Jackson, Stephen and Philip: 2005, Boghossian: 1998). The co-operative inquiry was a method to interpret a particular socially constructed reality. Likewise change is equally socially constructed.

Social Worker: The professional definition of a UK social worker is to promote social change, problem solve in the complexities of human relationships whilst empowering those who are marginalised or oppressed. Social workers employ theories of human behaviour and an awareness of social systems to intervene where families are in crisis. Principles of social justice and human rights are central to the profession. Children and family social workers are mandated to safeguard vulnerable children whilst assisting children and families in need. Social work practice is then linked to investigating allegations or concerns over the abuse of children, intervene when children are in danger, prevent child abuse, prevent children requiring state care, (unless there is a need for immediate protection or there is no other alternative), assist parents in improving their parental capacity whilst advocating for services, (such as child care, benefits, food stamps, housing), to assist parents or other extended family members care for children and work to achieve the rehabilitation of children with their families.

'The Borough': The research takes place in what I term as 'the Borough' which refers to a geographical area of London; one of the thirty three boroughs in London. I use this term to maintain anonymity.

The Child Protection System: This system holds great symbolism, incorporates a variety of human collectives and is characterised by common tasks, inter-group relationships, time limits and an effective power structure. Through membership there exists implicit delegation to the Child Protection conferences legitimising the system and its functions.

The Group – I refer in the thesis to 'the group' which is a catch all collective term for members of the co-operative inquiry group.

The Local Authority: In a further attempt to guard anonymity I also use the term 'the Local Authority' which refers to the administrative system of local government which administers services across '**the Borough**'.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Case file audit template

Personal details					Birth Father			Living arrangements			Information on fathers during initial assessment					Fathers and CP investigations		Fathers and initial child protection conferences						Family Group Conferences						Comments
ICS No:	Current Status	Age	Gender:	Ethnicity	Birth Father named on file	Father's contact details recorded	Birth father living in household	Parental responsibility	Father's status in relation to the mother	With whom the child lives	Child in contact with birth father/other significant father figure	Father invited to a meeting	Father attended a meeting	If not invited or did not attend reason noted on file	If not invited or did not attend, father involved in the assessment in another way	Father the subject of investigation re. protection for child	Father informed of outcome of initial referral	Father invited to attend	Father attended	Father's involvement with the child assessed in report	Father's risks assessed	Father's strengths assessed	Father informed of outcome for case conference	Family Group conference offered	Family Group conference held	Number of Fathers who attended	If father did not attend, whether a reason noted	If father did not attend was he involved In another way	If father did not attend, was he informed of the outcome	Additional information

CHAPTER 2: A SUMMARY CHRONOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH IMPLEMENTATION

Chapter 4; A Chronology of the Breaking Down Barriers Co-operative Inquiry

INTRODUCTION

This chronology provides empirical evidence of organisational change once again using Bradbury and Reason (2009) guide on how to evidence transformation. Chapter 4 evidences what Pawson (2006: 123) articulately describes as; '*an implementation chain*'. The Breaking down Barriers co-operative inquiry group 'theory tested'. Preliminary and intermediate actions and outputs were identified, developed, experimented and tested, evaluated via the co-operative inquiry reflective meetings and either redeveloped and tested and evaluated again or identified as achieving emergence after the first series of experiments and recorded as final outputs, (although subject to review as the inquiry progressed).

This chapter records the process of experimentation, action and reflection and the cycling of the research process by collecting and charting events (data) in a chronologically format (as recommended by Heron; 1996). This chronology provides an empirical record of preliminary, intermediate and final outputs and outcomes over the life of the inquiry. This chronology also evidences personal, professional and organisational change as a result of the co-inquiry. The chronology was written as it brings to life the activity, energy and enthusiasm of the co-inquirers (and others) whilst also acting to illustrate our actions because the co-operative inquiry and this dissertation cannot capture everything about everything; 'choices have had to be made'. (Pawson: 2006).

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
June 2009	MSc research activity 'How are men thought about in social work practice?' completed	6 local discourses identified that affect how social workers think about fathers	This original research emerged from within the organisation and led to the establishment of the Breaking Down Barriers project.
25.6.09	Presentation of the MSC research to the Senior Management Team, Children's Social Care		The Senior Management Team of CSC agreed to support a further project designed to implement the research recommendations
1.9.09 – 12.11.09	Discussions, supervisions and meetings with Head of Service CIN and Director of Child Protection CSC, Business Support Manager, colleagues and peers within the Local Authority and my supervisor at the Tavistock	Permission to proceed with the inquiry within the Children-in-Need Service and participation from staff from CSC for a minimum of a year.	Key permissions, access and resources in place

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
	Action Research Project begins		
1.9.09 – 12.11.09	Academic supervision, lectures, reading, discussion and further reflection with my tutor and supervisor	Identification of Action Research as a possible methodology to implement changes in practices.	The identification of a valid applicable methodology.
14.12.09	First Induction Meeting		7 people committed to participate as co-inquirers following the first induction.
23.11.09 – 13.1.10	70 case files audited	Quantitative measure of current social work practice	A base line measurement of current practice in 09
14.1.10	Second Induction Meeting and Pilot of BdB Co-operative Inquiry	Fourteen people attended. Summary of Actions: The group agreed to commission, coordinate, take part in and manage through the CI a mapping and profiling exercise to be conducted in partnership	14 people committed to participate Research / Project aims and objectives were agreed and the group requested a 'pilot' run of a cycle of action, reflection and action which was undertaken between 14.1.10 and 24.2.10.

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
		The group agreed to contribute time and effort to identify fathers and other family members to be interviewed or attend focus groups.	
24.2.10	First BdB Co-operative Inquiry	Participants identified topics for exploration and continued to manage, coordinate and take part in the mapping and profiling exercise with FI.	Aims and goals for the research project identified
28.4.10	BdB Co-operative Inquiry	Focus on internal CIN Systems and current staffing attitudes.	
9.6.10	BdB Co-operative Inquiry	Summary of Actions: Case Study Analysis Presentation on Safety Planning which led to a new process and procedure developed by the group in keeping women, children and	Safety Planning Process & Procedures institutionalised across the organisation Exponentially, this led to a dialogue with child protection co-ordinators

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
		staff safe when working with fathers.	about how to include more fathers in child protection conferences. As a direct result of the inquiry eight additional trainings were organised for social workers about identifying and engaging with fathers particularly those who perpetrate domestic violence.
26.7.10	Meeting with 6 representatives from the Women's sub group of MARAC	The representatives formally requested that the research activity should immediately cease.	Significant resistance evidences defensive organisational thinking and evidences the project is making progress.
27.7.10	BdB Co-operative Inquiry Review of Inquiry Process, Review of Inquiry Aims and Review of Fatherhood Institute Research	Through our discussion and reflections we identified a series of actions to support social workers intervene with fathers (the Application stage). We wrote a 'Working Safely with Men' guide	For emergence to occur we needed to engage the wider system. Ongoing containment of social workers' anxieties in relation to threats of violence.

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
		which was then presented by co-inquirers to all social work teams. We also revised our service level agreement with the council's legal department to prosecute parents who threatened social workers. One co-inquirer, (a deputy team manager; DTMs), agreed to encourage her peers to address paternal alienation in their [DTMs] monthly developmental groups.	Adoption of the 7 Aims Awareness raising of working with fathers across other professional groups
29.7.10	Implementation of new practice and systems within the Referral & Advice Team	All R & A social workers and administrators trained to ask for the fathers details on every case referred into the service.	Each time a professional referred into the Referral and Advice Team they would be asked about the father. This would inform their own practice and encourage them to ask for the father's details in their future work.

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
17.8.10	Meeting with Teenage Parents and Young Parent Coordinate (for the LA)	Young fathers working agreement set up	Working with young fathers to be included in the teenage pregnancy strategy for 2011 and 12.
3.9.10	Child Protection Conferences	Guidelines for inviting violent partners to child protection conferences developed, agreed and circulated across the service.	
6.9.10	Email from a PHD academic interesting in discussing methodologies	We share information and perspectives	Academic rigour, informal peer support, developing a network for people interested in this topic.
8.9.10	BdB Co-operative Inquiry presentation and discussion on Safety Planning	Recognition of the complexity surrounding engaging violent men. Summary of Actions: Develop the Child Protection Conference system and practice to plan to include men Development of Safety Planning within CIN	This leads to a launch of safety planning procedures across all CIN Teams

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
		Agreed to continually supply the group with examples of the techniques used by social workers to engage fathers	
9.9.10	Teenage Pregnancy Strategy	Written contribution to the teenage pregnancy handbook regarding fathers.	Targets include engagement with fathers
13.9.10	Fathers Matter Steering Group	Academics Clare Fraser, Sean Haresnape, Cathy Ashley, share their findings on developing local models of good practice and I share the current learning from our project.	Interconnecting with leading academics in the field
14.9.10	Training of social workers across the CIN Service	Training provided by DVIP to 40 social workers on DV and engaging perpetrators including members of the co operative inquiry group.	Sub-cultural shift with conversations about fathers happening around CIN
15.9.10	Presentation to MARAC	Need to garner support from the	

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
		DV forums	
13.10.10	CP Co-ordinators	Confirmation from co-inquirer and CP Chair that engagement of fathers remained a significant topic of conversation for all CPC chairs.	However, little change in the numbers of fathers attending CPCs
13.10.10	BdB Co-operative Inquiry	Changing social workers' attitudes Summary of Actions: FGC Co-ordinator to attend all social work team meetings Each co-inquiry to lead a discussion in their team meetings over social workers attitudes to the engagement of fathers Write paternal charter Co-inquirers to identify cases where fathers have been engaged	All social workers trained by DVIP on safety planning and engaging men. 60 training evaluations collected and evidenced: 9. About time that this training happened. 10. Greater understanding of violence 11. Increase in skills in managing the threat of violence. 12. Skills in keeping safe.
28.10.10	Request by Professor Cooper for	Presentation to twelve post-	Replicability, validity and raising

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
	me to present the research plan and current progress to the Policy and Research Group	graduate students and social work professionals. Their feedback provided further perspectives upon the research method and analysis.	awareness
16.11.10	Presentation to Fatherhood Institute and London Probation Services	London Probation interested in taking forward our learning	London probation then contact us to implement a pilot project they are leading entitled 'Caring Dads'
29.11.10	Finance agreed for a young fathers' worker for 18 months	His role; to engage young fathers (under 25).	
7.12.10	Fathers Matters Three Editorial Strategy Group	Contribution to final draft document. We also start to develop a good practice guide on working with fathers.	Learning transferred to BdB project
8.12.10	Fathers Matters – Parenting Funding Steering Group	Fathers Matters 3 discussion of outputs, the development of local models of good practice, action research, training, e-learning, national conference and the	There is interconnectivity from the local work to this national agenda. Emergence is evidenced as we work with 3 other boroughs to develop a practice model.

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
		dissemination of the report's findings	
20.12.11	Newly Qualified Workshop	8 NQSW attend a workshop and 2 co-inquirers offer a 2 hour training and discussions on father inclusion	By 20.12.11 70% of all CIN social workers trained to engage with fathers
21.12.11	FDAC (Family Drug & Alcohol Court)	FDAC – first father graduates with residence order and praise from Judge over the Local Authority's commitment to fathers.	This led the social worker to present this case study at the practitioners' conference in early 2011 to over one hundred colleagues.
23.12.11	Haringey LSCB	Haringey LSCB request presentation of the project.	Raising awareness outside of the LA promoting replication of the project activities
5.1.11	BdB Co-operative Inquiry	Identification of good practice techniques to engage fathers and a	A good practice guide for social workers & managers on how to

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
		discussion and analysis of the Father Inclusive Audit Summary of Actions: All inquirers to identify cases in their respective teams where there has been good engagement of fathers	engage fathers has been written, distributed and all social workers have been trained in its contents. (See Ch 10)
5.1.11	Training social workers to risk assess perpetrators of domestic violence	40 trained in Barnardo's Risk assessment and Engaging men between January and March 2011.	An increasingly confident and empowered workforce.
17.1.11	Contribution to the 2011/12 Children's Services Training agenda		All teams and managers were trained in safety planning. 40 trained Barnardo's Risk Assessment Matrix. All Leaving Care and Youth Offending workers were trained in working with young fathers

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
			Additional training agreed, funded for 3 years, for 20 social workers, the subject; 'understanding masculinity involving fathers'.
18.1.11	Discussion with Director of Children's Services	Director of Children Services agrees to encourage schools and children centre staff to adopt creative methods to work with fathers.	Emergence through the wider system.
20.1.11	Paternal Pledge	The paternal pledge goes live on several different sites within the Local Authority's website (See Appendix 5)	Clear evidence to fathers of the service they can expect across Children's Services
2.2.11	Interviewed by the Guardian Newspaper regarding the engagement of men.	Article prepared for the Guardian website for the following day	Raising awareness, evidencing validity, emergence and replicability
3.2.11	Key Note speaker and plenary organiser for Working with Risky	Presentation of the project	Raising awareness, evidencing validity, emergence and

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
	and Dangerous Men national conference.		replicability
3.2.11	Article published in Community Care	Professional publication	Raising awareness, evidencing validity, emergence and replicability
4.2.11	Project presented to other local authorities' Children's Social Care Services	I circulated details of the project to Oxfordshire, Lambeth, Haringey CSCs.	Raising awareness, evidencing validity and replicability
8.2.11	LA Practitioner Conference	2 case studies involving fathers and father engagement were presented without any intervention or planning from any member of the co-operative inquiry.	This evidences that ideas and conversations were starting to emerge within the wider system. An indication of sub-cultural organisational change: (Seel: 2002).
16.2.11	BdB Co-operative Inquiry	A Review of Progress after one year since inception. We agree to extend the life of the project for a further 6 months.	Co-operative inquirers were receiving anecdotal feedback that there was a demand for services for men. All social workers, supervisors and managers'

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
			appraisals outline the need to ensure safety planning is in operation for each worker and in each team and set targets to engage fathers / perpetrators of domestic violence.
17.2.11	Reflective observation of group processes	The Assistant Director, Centre for Child and Family Research, Loughborough University observed the 16.2.11 co-operative inquiry.	Validity of the research methodology
19.2.11	Domestic violence strategy development	Co-inquirers also influenced particular junctures within the Service's systems.	
28.2.11	An email from a manager whose is not a co-inquirer	A recommendation that the project needs to identify father inclusive champions in each team, (not just those represented within the research). All social workers and	Each recommendation implemented and further evidence from workers not part of the project but engaged in the project's aims and objectives.

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
		managers' job descriptions should include the engagement of fathers / perpetrators of violence.	
1.3.11	Training of social workers	Training programme developed to work with difficult to engage men.	A more confidence workforce
2.3.11	Police agreement	Police agree that all Merlins (78s) should have partner details and information circulated to officers' to outline this on easy to use laminated cards.	All police officers given a laminated business card with details of how to complete a Merlin 78 and this includes the words: *Partners – Include all relevant persons present at the address (i.e. boyfriends / partners)* and also including *telephone numbers, DOBs and addresses.*
2.3.11	Planning meeting with Targeted Youth Services, Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator and Health	Planning for provision for young fathers	This led to the development of services for fathers in 2011 and 2012
15.3.11	Presentation to LSCB	Presentation to LSCB with all	A watershed moment as the

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
		agencies agreeing all 7 recommendations returning in Sept 11 for feedback.	project was given greater authority and legitimacy and integrated the project's aims across Health, Police, Education and all agencies on LSCB.
16.3.11	Presentation to Professor Eileen Munro / Tim Loughton MP Minister for Children's Services at the DfE		Again, raising awareness, evidencing validity and replicability National audience and influencing Munro's report Project seen as legitimate and given greater authority back at the LA with co-inquirers and with colleagues. Interconnection via NGOs at a national level Evidence the learning is being applied in other systems
18.3.11	Prisons in the borough	2 co-inquirers explored opportunities of working in the	This work was taken on by a colleague who was an ally to the

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
		borough's prisons with the NGO Family Man or Fathers inside.	project
22.3.11	Teenage pregnancy strategy update	Male inclusion added to the teenage pregnancy action plan / strategy for the second year.	Interconnectivity to other services and systems
22.3.11	Feedback from fathers	Positive feedback from a father over the work completed by a family support worker directly influenced by the activities of the co-operative inquiry.	Direct evidence of changes in practice
28.3.11	BdB Co-operative Inquiry	Summary of Actions: The development of data collection system/s to regularly assess patterns of use in services	The LSCB agreed that all mandatory trainings they co-ordinate should include specific training on the importance of identifying and including fathers.
29.3.11	Recruitment process for new social workers	Interview questions were changed to include a question on working	Staff induction and Appraisals All recently recruited staff to

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
		with fathers Article for Safeguarding Newsletter Performance Management agree to develop methods to record the engagement of men on ICS	attend mandatory domestic violence and safety planning training. The appraisal goals for 2010 identified needed to include fathers in assessments and interventions as did 2011 appraisal targets. In 2012 the appraisal targets are attending specific trainings in working with perpetrators of domestic violence.
31.3.11	R&A (Referral & Advice CSC Front door)	Engaging Men guidance for R&A and partners circulated QAF (Quality Assurance Audit Tool) will include whether males are included in assessments, care planning etc as of April 2011.	Sustainable systems beginning to be developed
1.4.11	Community Paediatrics request	Community Paediatrics request	Again, raising awareness,

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
	meeting	presentation to the Paediatrician's forum of the 2 hospitals	evidencing validity and replicability
11.4.11	Presentation to the Senior Management Team for Health Services	This presentation led to the senior management team developing a strategic plan to engage fathers	Emergence in other systems
21.4.11	Article on Project in Community Care	Colleagues from other boroughs and councils across the country contact me and request information.	Again, raising awareness, evidencing validity and replicability
24.4.11	LSCB Annual Report 2010 – 2011	The report identifies the need to work with fathers and see them as a risk and also a resource	Other systems promoting the inclusive agenda
11.5.11	BdB Co-operative Inquiry	Discussions on sustainability. Summary of Actions: Supporting LSCB members to develop their strategic plans Recommendations Supervisors trained in Safety	All internal CSC case audits included question about father engagement in assessments and plans 12 of the 18 members of the LA's LSCB have developed a Strategic

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
		Planning	plan to engage fathers by January 2012.
2.6.11	LSCB News	Working with fathers is reported on in this issue which is circulated to over 3000 professionals in the borough	Other systems promoting the inclusive agenda
21.6.11	Meeting with Dr Mark Osborn, Fatherhood Institute	Discussion about the action research project and in particular our learning. We agreed, (from our learning), that any future project must include the Local Safeguarding Children's Board as this is a key agent of change.	Validity of the research methodology Evidence that the learning from this project has been applied to a national project being piloted in 6 local authorities.
22.6.11	Performance Information	The first report is distributed amongst co-inquiry members that provides a methodology that measures the involvement of men	A method to record data A reporting system to measure inclusion This means the organisation is for the very first time recording

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
			information about fathers
22.6.11	BdB Co-operative Inquiry	The group analysed data about father inclusion in the child protection system, Summary of Actions: Supporting the Leaving Care Service to identify and work with young fathers Further analysis over the development of data gathering systems across the council. We had identified three fathers' champions in the Looked After Service and three in the Leaving Care Service.	The inquiry confirms that safety plan is now well ingrained in teams The creation of a specialist Domestic violence social worker in April 2012 The NGO, Working With Men, agree to provide services for men for a three year period from April 2011.
23.6.11	Reflective observation of group	Dr Mark Osborn, Project Leader,	Validity of the research

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
	processes (we agreed not to meet during the August holiday period).	the Fatherhood Institute observed the co-operative inquiry and commented that: The egalitarian nature of the method means workers from across the organisation and with different functions are working together to achieve shared aims. Need to evidence what is the benefit / outcome of engaging fathers.	methodology The Fatherhood Institute requested that the LA agree to be a pilot borough for their forthcoming project Engaging Men in Child Protection. 12 of the LA's social workers and managers are asked to be filmed discussing good practice on engaging fathers as part of an e-learning package designed to be distributed across 6 local authorities.
25.6.11	Replication of the BdBs methodology by a national project entitled Engaging Men in Child		The Engaging Men in Child Protection Project aims are to develop father inclusive practice at

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
	Protection		senior manage level as well as with managers and social workers in Children's Social Care. I felt this validated the Breaking down Barriers methodology.
8.7.11	Visit by a North Western London Borough Council	We shared our methods, strategies, learning and process. They requested to observe the remaining BdB Co-operative Inquiry groups.	Current attempts to replicate this research project in another London Borough, July 2011 to present.
20.7.11	Visit by NGO Working With Men	We share our methods, strategies, learning and process	NGO WWM integrated into council wide services
25.7.11	Presentation to the Council's Equality Group	A discussion on the needs of fathers from Black and ethnic minority groups	The Children with Disabilities Multi-disciplinary Team have agreed to be trained in techniques to engage fathers and have agreed to pilot best practice as part of the

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
			Fatherhood Institute's Engaging Fathers in Child Protection Project.
3.8.11	North London Probation Services		The possibility of a service to perpetrators of domestic violence
23.8.11	Direct work with fathers in prison		Emergence as the project expands into local prisons indirectly
12.9.11	Presentation by Probation on Caring Dads to 20 social workers, managers and commissioners in the Local Authority	Continued conversations about including perpetrators in social work interventions	6 workers came forward to volunteer to train to facilitate Caring Dads groups
14.9.11 (See Ch 7)	Penultimate BdB Co-operative Inquiry	We discussed and reflected on whether we had achieved the aims and goals of the project Summary of Actions: All council policies and procedures need to include the father. All Children Services policies and procedures need to include fathers.	

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
		As do all systems of audit, all training programmes, inductions and appraisals. A communication Plan to all social workers and other professionals about the project and its findings.	
14.9.11	Caring Dads Seminar by Probation		Caring Dads included as a programme offered by Children's Services. £10K each year for 3 years was agreed to run 4 Caring Dads programmes throughout the year providing a service to 160 fathers.
27.9.11	Development of a new group entitled 'Developing Services for Fathers, a Multi-Agency Implementation of inclusive	As a continuation and a development from the co-operative inquiry this meeting was established and terms of reference	The group used the research aims as strategic aims. The group had the following roles:

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
	practice and Development of Services for Fathers' as the following phase after the BdB concludes.	agreed across multi-agency services in the borough.	
28.09.11	Attendance at the LSCB for feedback on their actions	Poor response by LSCB members – deadline postponed to November 2011.	Barrier to emergence
5.10.11	LSCB News letter	An article focuses on domestic violence and the need to engage perpetrators	Raising awareness
6.10.11	Engaging Men in Child Protection National Strategy Meeting	Meeting involving all 6 pilot local authorities. The project has a national platform. The strategic group; oversees and steers the project	This project has been integrated and includes the following: (Evidence of emergence through connectivity)
12.10.11	Father inclusive parenting	Parenting co-ordinator guarantees that all parenting classes, (Mellow	20% increase in the numbers of men attending parenting courses

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
		Parenting, and Strengthening Families), involve the inclusion of fathers.	over the life of the project
27.10.11 **THE FINAL CO-INQUIRY**	The Final BdB Co-operative Inquiry	This was solely a reflective session where we all thought about and discussed our learning and our views on the experience of the project.	Evidence of emergence, interconnectivity, system transformation, application and outcomes.
18.11.11	Presentation of analysis of LSCB members / organisations current response to fathers	LSCB members agree to commit to the Engaging Fathers in Child Protection Project	All systems and organisations in place to protect children have a father inclusive strategy and are working towards improving their response to fathers
22.11.11	Second meeting for the Developing Services for Fathers Group. A Multi-Agency Implementation of inclusive practice and Development of Services for Fathers	The meeting adopted a similar participative methodology as the co-operative inquiry:	A strategy including annual objectives for a father inclusive practice across Children's Services in place as of LSCB date in Nov 2011.

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
15.12.11	Caring Dads Implementation Group meeting	Referral mechanisms were agreed, a location (a children centre), security, a communication strategy is developed and an 'outcomes matrix' agreed.	
16.1.12	Email from final year social work student	Request for information about working with fathers as this student is interested in writing his final year dissertation on '*I am your father, the lost voice and resulting minimisation of the father's role and responsibility in social work*.	Replicability and promote learning and continuing the conversation
23.1.12	OFSTED Inspection of Safeguarding & Looked After Children Services	*Inspection Begins*	Replicability and promote learning and continuing the conversation
24.1.12	Engaging Men in Child Protection local Strategy Meeting	Ongoing implementation of the Engaging Men in Child Protection Project	See 6.10.11

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
25.1.12	Caring Dads Implementation Group meeting	Ongoing process in developing the first parenting group for abusive fathers.	See 14.9.11
27.1.12	Developing Fathers Services A Multi-Agency Implementation of inclusive practice and Development of Services for Fathers	Needs of fathers and families have been identified in the locality with particular attention to the needs of Black and ethnic minority fathers.	By this date we had established the following services for men: 12 expectant father's programmes A monthly young fathers group will be established by 1.3.12 A black fathers' group will be established by 1.4.12 An Arabic speakers group will be established by the 1.6.12. 6 children centres had specific services for fathers (during the week).
2.2.12	Email from an experienced Asian female social worker in the West Midlands requesting advice and	I provided guidance and advice	Again, influencing other workers outside of my local authority positively to include fathers.

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
	support on how to engage and assess fathers for a court case she is involved in		Further evidence of interconnectivity.
3.2.12	OFSTED Inspection of Safeguarding & Looked After Children Services	69 cases analysed, children, families and professionals interviewed, performance data analysed (See methodology)	OFSTED Inspectors conclude: Increase involvement with young fathers Increase in engagement and assessment of fathers Number of children placed with fathers has increased
7.2.12	Meeting at the Home Office with the lead Civil Servant for Domestic Violence.	This meeting was designed to contribute to the government's new domestic violence strategy due out in September 12.	The BdB research project was presented at this meeting.
8.2.12	Contribution to the 2011/12 Children's Services Training agenda	We tested the value of trainings.	Fathers to be discussed regularly in group supervision in a new model developed through the Engaging Men in Child Protection project.

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
13.2.12	Integrating the NGO Working With Men further into Children's Services systems		Merging into systems
22.2.12	Development of the teenage pregnancy strategy 2013 / 14	The team make a commitment to training all youth workers in working with young fathers.	Systemic transformation and on-going emergence
28.2.12	Children's Services Commissioners	The commissioners agree that all financial contracts will include that organisations adopt a fatherhood strategy	Accumulate emergence
29.2.12	Email correspondence with the academic Clare Roskill	Clare writes: the Local authority seems to be making some excellent progress (in including fathers)	Evidence of emergence
28.2.12	Meeting with student social worker on placement	This student is writing her final year dissertation on the role of men as foster carers and asks for my advice	Replicability and promoting learning and continuing the conversation
1.3.12	The Integrated Children's System	All single assessment templates to be redesigned to encourage the	Sustainability

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
		inclusion of fathers.	
13.3.12	Email from a student social worker from Brunel	The student is interested in writing her final year dissertation on 'Parenting at a Distance' Investigating non-residential fathers relationships with their children.	Replicability and promoting learning and continuing the conversation
27.3.12	Multi-Agency Implementation of inclusive practice and Development of Services for Fathers	Discussion on the sustainability of those services currently being offered.	Agreed the EYS will fund 12 expectant fathers' programmes each year for the next three years. There has been a 25% increase in the numbers of fathers being recorded by midwives. Increase in the number of enquiries about services from Health Visitors
4.4.12	Engaging the Family Nurse Project	The entire FNP advisory Board	FNP agree to fully adopt the 7 point

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
		agenda is dedicated to identifying, engaging and supporting fathers.	inclusion plan further evidencing emergence and interconnectivity.
21.4.12	LSCB Annual Report 2011-2012	The report identifies the 7 aims to father inclusion and encourages all agencies to implement these aims	Ongoing emergence but also sustainability and '*a system as a whole*' approach
25.4.12	Training twenty social workers in 'Safeguarding Children by Working effectively with Fathers' as part of the Fatherhood Institute's Engaging Men in Child Protection Project.		Learning outcomes: Greater knowledge of the research evidence and legal framework Identified barriers to working with fathers Enhanced confidence, knowledge and skills to assess and communicate with fathers Increased understanding as to the benefits of father inclusion Developing, in one's own practice ways to work with fathers
9.5.12	Community Care Magazine Launch	http://www.communitycare.co.uk/	Clear evidence of emergence and

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
		static-pages/articles/engaging-fathers/ and http://www.communitycareconferences.co.uk/fathers?cp=comcareweb	accumulative emergence at a national level
16.5.12	Family Nurse Partnership	All nurses trained in engaging fathers	New systems in place to record details of fathers
18.5.12	Ofsted Chief Inspector	Ofsted request information and a meeting as they are keen to learn more about how to engage fathers, a request to train inspectors and to include the learning on Ofsted's Best Practice Website	Ofsted's request validates the research process and evidences that the learning is being transferred nationally and to those who inspect CSC. This requests acts as independent evidence and evaluation of the inquiry's aims.
21.5.12	Included in the Strategic Plan for	The strategic plan consists of:	There is clear evidence here of the

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
	CSC for 2012 / 13	1. Implement paternal contract, 2. More children being placed with men in families. 3. Implement research aims and recommendations	accumulation and incremental growth in relation to the inclusion of fathers in terms of the BdB's project but also wider system change and service provision.
24.5.12	The College of Social Work	A request by the College of Social Work to publish details of the project in their magazine and website.	Father inclusive practice becomes a discussion point within national journals sanctioned by the College of Social Work
25.5.12	Public Health Strategy	Developing plan to include direct work with fathers in the 'First 21 months' strategy	Emergence
11.06.12	Waltham Forest request for support about working with fathers	Advice, guidance and support offered and our written methodology shared.	Emergence
13.6.12	Reaction to no change in the numbers of fathers attending CP Conferences	Plan to increase fathers attendance in the group agreed.	In order to aid understanding we have a final draft audit of 20 CP cases with a number of

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
			recommendations to improve attendance at CP conferences Implementation Engaging Fathers in Children protection audit
21.6.12	Request from Nick Smithers, Fathers Worker, Circle Edinburgh, Craigroyston Primary School	Request for information on research	Emergence: The conversation continues
25.6.12	Request from Emily Munro, Assistant Director, Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Child and Family Research , Loughborough University	Request a summary on the engagement of fathers in the single assessment to be included in her evaluation for the DfE.	Emergence at a national level
27.6.12	Second Caring Dads' group starts	9 fathers attend the first group. 3 social workers from the CIN service trained as facilitators	Evidence of a transformation in service provision Evidence of abusive males being held to account

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
17.7.12	Senior Manager from Family Support, FIP, AMASS and FISS requests workshop for all staff (40 workers) on how to engage fathers		Evidence of continued emergence and interconnectivity across teams and the service.
27.7.12	Head of Service Troubled Families requests methodology to capture fathers' data in assessments and plans.	The methodology we developed in the co-operative inquiry was shared as was the audit framework,	This methodology has cut across services and is emerging in other parts of the system equalling transformation.
16.8.12	Violence Against Women & Girls Strategy		The strategy adopts the research's 7 Point Plan for father inclusion
19.9.12	Presentation of analysis of LSCB members / organisations current response to fathers	LSCB members agree to commit further to the Engaging Fathers in Child Protection Project	All systems and organisations in place to protect child have a father inclusive strategy and are working towards improving their response to fathers
And on it goes as father inclusive practice continues to emerge in our organisation and further afield. For			

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
Example:			
And on it goes as father inclusive practice continues to emerge in our organisation and further afield. For Example:			
December 2014	LSCB News	An article focuses on domestic violence and the need to engage perpetrators	Raising awareness
February 2013	Engaging Men in Child Protection National Strategy Meeting		
April 2013	Father inclusive parenting	Parenting co-ordinator guarantees that all parenting classes, (Mellow Parenting, and Strengthening Families), involve the inclusion of fathers.	20% increase in the numbers of men attending parenting courses
November 2014	All Party Parliamentary Group Annual Conference Presentation of the research to	Research distributed Additional networks	Research remains relevant and academics, professionals and others keen to learn more.

Date	Project Activity Description	Exploration / Explanation & Emergence / Intermediate outputs	Evidence of emergent properties, accumulative emergence and interconnectivity = systems transformation Application (Propositional and Presentational outcomes)
	over 40 MPs, civil servants and representatives from NGOs.		
November 2014	Final draft of a chapter completed for Publication in a new book entitled: Relationship Based Research in Social Work: Theory & Practice of Practice Research.	Research distributed Methodology further legitimised	Research remains relevant and academics, professionals and others keen to learn more.
March 2015	A request for the author to speak at a conference in Manchester entitled: 'Engagement with Fathers'	Research distributed Additional networks	Research remains relevant and academics, professionals and others keen to learn more. Sustainability, interconnectivity

Conclusion

This chronology demonstrates the implementation of the methodology and evidences the phases, processes and actions that were taken to being about organisational and practice change.

Appendix 3 Agreed Contract of Participation

CHILDREN SERVICES

WORKING WITH MEN,

‘BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS’ PROJECT

CONTRACT OF PARTICIPATION

Introduction

The main aim of the Project is to develop an approach to; 'overcome the Difficulties of including Men in Social Work Services and Support' (working title). The value of the Project is clear. The project will contribute, experiment and evidence different methodological approaches to including men in statutory child care social work assessments and interventions.

The Initial Main aims of the project are:

Simply the aim of this research is to design and implement an Action Research Project aimed at increasing the engagement of fathers in Children's Social Care.

My overall objective is to create a conceptual model, grounded and thoroughly test by the co-operative inquiry, of a sustainable system that brings about transformation in one area of practice in one local authority. (If successful, this research can be utilized for advice and guidance for others who are interested in implementing and targeting an innovative iteration of this intervention in their own organisation). (Pawson: 2006).

- To develop a sustainable change process within a complex adaptive organisation
- To develop an alternative inclusive approach to change management
- To achieve practical, operational systemic change to front line services
- To challenge assumptions and change behaviours
- To establish a co-operative inquiry group that leads changes in social work practice
- To develop the skills of co-inquirers in facilitation, group processes and methods and practices of inclusive practice
- To develop my own management and group facilitation skills

These initial Aims were further developed by July 2010 also now include:

1. Create and adopt a fatherhood strategy for CIN and related services with realistic goals and targets. This should include a policy for communicating with fathers and an explicit code of practice for dealing with fathers and male carers. This strategy should be communicated and discussed with all staff and visible for families.
2. Identify objectives for engagement with fathers as a whole agency/ies, individual services and individual staff, with these objectives being discussed in supervision and appraisal systems as well as being used for performance management.
3. Refine the existing referral and assessment process and the accompanying paperwork to ensure that fathers' data is collected explicitly, systematically and accurately.
4. Use data collection system/s to regularly assess patterns of use in services, and identify areas where fathers are not being included to focus communication and services.
5. Ensure that training is available for staff at every level of the organisation/s in father-inclusive practice. This will ensure that father-inclusive practice becomes embedded in all levels of work, and not reliant on the commitment of targeted services or committed individuals within teams.

6. Establish better pathways and referral processes between generic "preventative" provision including Children's Centres and related services and "crisis" intervention services such as CIN. This could enable vulnerable fathers to be identified and supported earlier.
7. Ensure appropriate focused and gender specific information is available to give fathers ante-natally and subsequently. This information, publicity and communication should state "mother, fathers and other carers".

We agreed practical targets:

- To attempt to institutionalise practices, procedures and systems which aid inclusion.
- To increase the numbers of men (fathers, step-fathers, and partners) including telephone numbers, addresses and dates of birth recorded on all referrals.
- To increase the numbers of men (fathers, step-fathers, and partners) included on Initial assessments.
- To increase the numbers of men (fathers, step-fathers, and partners) comprehensively assessed as part of a core assessment
- To increase the numbers of men (fathers, step-fathers, partners) invited to and attending Initial and Review Child Protection Conferences
- To increase the numbers of men (fathers, step-fathers, partners) invited to and attending Family Group Conferences
- To increase the numbers of men (fathers, step-fathers, and partners) invited to LAC reviews.
- To increase the numbers of men involved (fathers, step-fathers, partners) when initiating court proceedings.

For staff it should enable social workers to feel more confident, comfortable and supported to engage with men.

For services users, it will be an opportunity for men to be included in the assessments and care planning of their children. Research evidence is clear that regular contact with fathers (where there is no evidence of significant harm) promotes healthy and positive child development.

Research also evidences that identification of fathers in referrals and assessments promotes contact with the paternal extended family who can subsequently be included in assessments and care planning options. (Ashley *et al*; 2008).

And for managers it will support the development of social workers and the quality of the service provision to children and their families. It further demonstrates that this CSC is a learning organisation and is responding to the statutory guidance and developments in practice directed via central government and through research and experience.

The project is being initiated by Gavin Swann, Operational Manager, Children-in-Need Service, (contact details removed for the sake of anonymity).

The other participants in the project will include; social workers and managers from CIN and colleagues from Early Years, Health and Education.

The central tenets of participation in the project are:

- All participants in the project will equally participate, cooperate and collaborate in decisions concerning the focus of the work, the methods to be used, and the forms and content of any project reports.
- Participants share a collective commitment to investigate issues or problems through a participative approach defined by the group
- Participants share a desire to engage in self and collective reflection to gain clarity about the issues under investigation
- Participants engage in individual or collective action that leads to a useful solution that benefits those involved.
- Participants will build alliances with one another in the planning, implementation of the project and in the dissemination of research
- *(McIntyre; 2008, Heron: 1996).*

Participation is entirely voluntary. You have the right to decide not to take part, and if you do decide to take part you have the right to withdraw at any stage. Involvement in the project will not affect any other care relationships or organisation relationships, and if you have concerns about this, please raise this issue with Gavin Swann or with anyone else you wish.

It is important that this contract is based on voluntary and well informed agreement to realise the values of autonomy, co-operation and wholeness. Our co-operative inquiry is based on the principle of a community of value, and this value premises its foundation. (Reason; 1997).

The work of the project will take place over an initial period of 12 - 18 months (subject to review and extension in March 2011) and will consist of:

An initial interview of participants to establish their views.

The recommended method the group will use to test out new methods of working will be as follows:

a. Identifying agreed actions,
b. Undertaking, experimenting and testing out new methods and practices of working
c. Recording the processes and outcomes
d. and then returning to the group to share and reflect on the experiences of introducing new methods of working
e. Consider original actions in light of process and outcomes.
f. The next cycle of action may continue to test out the original action or move on to pose new questions and processes.

- Information from presentations, conferences and research nationally will be presented to the group from invited national actors in the field of male inclusion in social work services. This is designed to contribute to the groups' strategy.
- A 6 weekly trial of individual and organisational new methods of working
- Discussions and reflections over the experience of trialling new methods and practices. Group evaluation
- A further 6 weekly trial of individual and organisational new methods of working
- Discussions and reflections over the experience of trialling new methods and practices. Group evaluation
- A review of progress and decisions on extension
- A further 6 weekly trial of individual and organisational new methods of working
- Discussions and reflections over the experience of trialling new methods and practices. Group evaluation
- Group identifies suggested methods to adopt organisational and future working arrangements.
- Circulation of draft report for suggestions and comments.
- The development of one or two sub group activities may also be planned over the next twelve months.

Each meeting will be video and audio recorded. Draft transcripts of the group meetings will be shared for comment. No recordings will be made without permission from those involved, and notes made from discussions and interviews will be checked for accuracy with those present.

The data created by the work will be circulated to other participants for their comments, and you will have the right to check and amend any report or interpretation of your own ideas before they are circulated to others.

Permission will be obtained before any data is reused for purposes other than those for which they were originally collected. All material concerning the project will be treated as confidential by all participants throughout the period of the project, and all written material concerning the project will be kept securely locked and password protected. Detailed rules for confidentiality will be discussed in relation to each stage of the work.

Interviews and meetings will be carefully conducted in such a way as to ensure that any tensions or anxieties are resolved harmoniously, and the project co-ordinators accept responsibility to provide whatever support they can, should this become necessary.

Any reports of the project work intended for publication outside the group of participants, if they wish, will acknowledge the contribution of all who wish to be named. Reports intended for publication will be circulated beforehand for comments and suggestions. At this stage all participants will have the right to delete any material which they feel may damage their own reputation, but the project initiators retain the right to publish an account of the project.

The above points are only a draft, indicating generally how the project will be conducted and your comments and suggestions concerning all aspects of the project are most welcome.

This document will be reviewed each quarter although any co-inquirer can make representation about altering its content at any time.

Decision-making

We considered, at the induction; unanimity, a percentage vote, a majority vote, consensus or the election of a leader who would integrate proposals via negotiation or make decision based on group discussion. We settled on a consensus approach to decision-making. When the minority had felt listen too and appreciated and still the disagreement remained the minority would acquiesce to the majority. This method was subject to review. Also before we made any group decision we agreed that each co-inquirer would state out loud their view because this promotes autonomy. (Heron: 1996).

Signed by each participant

Reviewed on: 24.2.10, 27.7.10, 13.10.10, 16.2.11, 11.5.11 & 27.10.11

Appendix 4

Examples of Actions from Co-operative Inquiry Meetings

Examples of Actions from Co-operative Inquiry Meetings

Introduction

I have provided 4 examples of Action Plans which were circulated to each co-operative inquirer twenty four hours after each group meeting. All identities have been anonymised.

Breaking Down Barriers Action Plan 5.1.11 **Tasks to be Undertaken**	**Responsible Person**	**Dates to be Completed**
1) Safety planning power-point to be circulated to CP co-ordinators	TD	On-going
2) WMP to be raised at Ops (WHEN) and team meetings	All managers	By February - GS
.		
3) JH and GL to be contacted re getting CAF to be included.	GS	6 weeks
4) On reading the minutes of the last meeting I thought it would be good to have a list of resources to include information resources on services for men.	GS and BD to write	6 weeks
5). DVIP training and feedback - to attend all CIN team meetings with Rebecca from DVIP to talk about safety planning.	CE	12 weeks
7) Men to be included in	CR & CE	Rolling action –CR & CE

mandatory training /probation		On-going
8) Barnardos risk assessment tool – how can the group WMP exploit this opportunity	CR	6 weeks
9) Any opportunity - -all co-enquirers to be including men	CE / CR	6 weeks
10). Training of uniformed police officers	CE	18 weeks
11). To write up agreement of systemic approach from first point of contact	GS suggested we use Tri-x system GS to investigate more GSS to meet other CIN teams to discuss	6 weeks 12 weeks
12). Safety Planning – have all co-enquirers systemised safety planning and circulate power point slide in their team meeting	GS en enquire re Haringey's approach on staff feeling safe CE	6 weeks Rolling
13). A discussion with DTM groups re improving the quality of supervisions preventing the barriers of engaging fathers.	AMc GSE	6 weeks
14) Manager of the FGC process to meet to discuss FGC's.	CE to look at QAF re engagement of men	6 weeks
15) Is the audit tool for CAF – is there a question re the engagement of men?	All	12 weeks
16) Examples of cases that demonstrates where the		

barriers exist and methods to engage men. 17) Experiment in the Highbury Team re male and female SW to do visits and to receive feedback. 18) Discuss at the next meeting the need for communication strategy and life of project. 19). Invite SW's to discuss how they find working with fathers / barriers /success – how did they overcome negativity.	ME All All	By next CI Review in 3 months 6 weeks
Breaking Down Barriers Action Plan 30.3.11 **Tasks to be Undertaken**	**Responsible Person**	**Dates to be completed**
1) *Advisory board needs to be present – need to be signed up – paternal contracts.* 2). A father on each of the advisory boards Head of EYS and Universal Health 3). ISCB report request – practitioners supervision to include engagement of men 4). Safety planning needs to be in Appraisals 5). Discussion re DTM group improving the quality of supervisions 6). Is the audit tool for	AF / GS TP GS & CE MC GS to discuss with DD	Ongoing By February 2012. 6 weeks 6 weeks 12 weeks

CAF(is there a question re engagement of men) 7). DVIP evaluations 8). Invite IRO 9). Manager FGCs to be invited 10). DVIP training and feedback 11). List of resources to include information resources for men 12). Make recommendations for IMIS database as a user 13). CR to bring a provisional curriculum to meeting on the Barnardos risk assessment 10-15min presentation to teach people how to use the tool 14). DN to send GS an outline of the training Rebecca is doing with Children's Centres 15). Info from the WMP to be put on TRIAX or on IZZI 16). Presentation to be done for safeguarding board re engagement of men	DN CE / CR GS Managers CE to speak to Ida and Ruth GS GS to speak to JH and GR CE GS CR / CE GS DN to speak discuss with AM GS MC /GS	Rolling action –CR & CE 6 weeks 6 weeks 6 weeks 6 weeks Rolling 12 weeks 6 weeks 6 weeks

26) Invite family support workers to meeting to discuss case studies and we are looking at the key themes	DN /GSS	Review in 3 months 6 weeks

Breaking Down Barriers Action Plan 11.05.11 **Tasks to be Undertaken**	**Person Responsible**	**Date Completed**
1).Develop services for the the family directory	BN	6 weeks
2). FSW male to be based within DVIP	GS / DN	18 weeks
3**).** Children's Centres – How many are opened on a Saturday – discuss with ISCB	GS / DN and AR	6 weeks
4). Fatherhood Institute to supply strategies to engage men	MC & AMC	6 weeks
5). DTM to be trained on DV Safety planning	AF	6 weeks
6). 100% QAF to be altered re men's details on QAF form	CR (outstanding from last week). All	6 weeks On-going
7). Further identification of cases where fathers have been engaged.	All	6 weeks
8). Read article on gender & power for discussion in next CI.		

Breaking Down Barriers Action Plan 11.05.11 **Tasks to be Undertaken**	**Person Responsible**	**Date Completed**
1). Information for men to go in the Family Directory	GS	6 weeks
2). Discussion to be held with TN re DV specialists in R &A and function of specialist SWs in the team	GS, ME & MC	6 weeks
3). Meeting to be held with Early Years to re-write procedures for the next three years to include fathers in all services and to apply the 7 aims.	GS, TP & AR	18 weeks
4). BdB contract to be re-circulated and reviewed by all co-inquirers.	All	6 weeks
5). All co-inquirers to reflect on the 7 aims and the general aims of the project. Are we going in the right direction – for discussion at next meeting?	All GS to pursue	6 weeks 6 weeks
6). BdB need a link from CLA	YM	6 weeks
7) YM to give B names of all young fathers from Independent Futures. B to approach each father and offer a service. YM to identify 3 members of staff to champion BdB in leaving care.	TD & All	6 weeks
8). Need to find out from TD if CP invitation letters are sent separately to parents. We also need to	ME and GS to meet PB to discuss PIs and fathers.	6 weeks

encourage the CP system to be more inclusive of fathers. Plan to be developed at next CI. 9)PIs 10) Discussion between JA and HR fathers and group supervision	AF	6 weeks
Breaking Down Barriers Action Plan 14.09.11 **Tasks to be Undertaken**	**Person Responsible**	**Date Completed**
1). Data on father inclusion in CP conferences to be circulated.	TD	6 weeks (final CI)
2). Supervision guidance on father engagement to be discussed in all team meetings	ME & AF	6 weeks
3). Review R&A's father inclusive practice	CR	6 weeks
4). All co-inquirers to complete questionnaire and consider successes and failures in the project.	All	6 weeks
5). All co-inquirers to consider next steps	All	6 weeks
6). Co-inquirers to review all new guidance on the engagement of fathers.	All	6 weeks
7). Outstanding issues for project include: - *separate invitation letters to*	TD	6 weeks

conference are sent out to parents when living in the same home address - *Feedback to be given on Caring Dads at the next meeting.*	GS	

Appendix 5

Paternal Pledge

Appendix: 5 Paternal Pledge

This pledge will detail the commitment that Children's Social Care has to the continual constructive engagement of fathers and their families. We at Children's Social Care are acutely aware of the dangers posed by certain men to Children & Families; we are also alert to the need that a child requires an appropriate paternal experience in order to develop a positive sense of self.

Children's Social Care recognise the need for men to feel actively engaged in all aspects of the assessment process, and are committed to adapting the assessment process to suit the needs of the male within the family, without alienating mother or moving away from a child focused agenda.

This document has its roots in child development and its aim is to constantly ensure that fathers are positively kept on the agenda when assessments are being completed; professionals are being spoken to, meetings being arranged and during ongoing Social Work reflections.

The goal therefore is to ensure that fathers are ingrained in the thinking of all Social Workers and members of the professional network as benign objects who are able to manage and understand the global needs of their children and that fathers have the capacity to change.

Children's Social Care Paternal Pledge.

- *All Assessments / Reports completed by the Social Work teams will include discussions to and about father(s) and where possible the wider paternal family.*
- *All Policy and Procedures will explicitly recognise fathers, the fathering role and the child's paternal experience.*
- *All non resident fathers' details should be clearly recorded on the Integrated Children's System.*
- *All non resident fathers will be copied into and sent letters that are sent to mother, and other professionals, where appropriate.*
- *All non resident fathers will be offered office appointments to go through assessments.*
- *Fathers will be invited to all meetings that involve their children.*
- *The views of fathers will be accurately recorded.*
- *The views of fathers will be given due consideration, and reasons for not adopting their views will be recorded accurately on the Integrated Children's System*
- *All non resident fathers will be given the necessary support and guidance regarding restabilising links with their children, where appropriate. This will include referrals for Family advocacy / family group conferences / family mediation / legal advice.*

- *All Social Workers will be given appropriate training for working with men; this will be refreshed every 2 years.*
- *All newly qualified Social Workers will be given an induction about the Council's commitment to working with men, this will be carried out by a Team Manager.*
- *All non resident fathers will be offered a visit that fits into their working schedule at all times.*
- *All Social Workers will ensure that exhaustive efforts are made to see fathers and these efforts recorded on the Integrated Children's System.*
- *All Social Workers will carry out an office based risk assessment of all high risk fathers. All risk assessments will be chaired by the Social Workers line manager.*

Appendix 6

Ethics

Mr Gavin Swann

Flat 12 Wood Wharf Apartments
Horseferry Place
London
SE10 9BB

31 January 2014

Dear Mr Swann

University of East London/The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust: submission of a thesis for examination for the degree of Professional Doctorate in Social Work: research ethics

I write further to recent correspondence regarding your Professional Doctorate. As you know, when preparations were being made to schedule your oral examination it became apparent that you were not able to provide written evidence of ethical approval of your research from our University Research Ethics Committee (UREC).

I confirm that we have received the signed consent forms from each individual study participant, which you submitted to the Chair of UREC, Professor Neville Punchard. Please take this letter as written confirmation that had you applied for ethical clearance from our UREC at the appropriate time, it would have been granted. Please note whilst this does not place you in exactly the same position you would have been in had clearance been obtained in advance, this decision will now enable you to proceed to your oral examination with a view to, if successful, receiving your doctoral award. Nevertheless, when responding to any questioning from the examiners regarding the ethical aspects of your research you must of course make reference to and explain these developments in an open and transparent way.

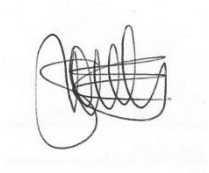
As previously advised, In order to ensure that there are no residual risks we have asked the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust to provide us with a reassurance that despite any procedural errors and/or omissions that may have occurred they are satisfied that the thesis that you have submitted meets the necessary criteria and is of an examinable standard. For the avoidance of any doubt, or misunderstanding, I must make it clear that the Tavistock' providing this assurance should not be in any way interpreted as an indication that the oral examination will have a successful outcome. The successful examination of any thesis is entirely in the hands of the examiners, who will make their decision taking

into account not only the content of the thesis submitted, but also the candidate's defence of the thesis at oral examination. Furthermore, please be aware that publishers may not accept your work for dissemination, as you did not have prior ethical approval at the time the research commenced. This matter is being dealt with separately as it falls outside the remit of our University Research Ethics Committee.

You will receive details of the arrangements for your examination by separate letter, if you have not already done so.

I hope that everything is clear but please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions. In order to ensure an efficient line of communication it would be helpful if queries could be channelled through the appropriate contact person at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust (Mr Will Bannister, Associate Director, Education and Training (WBannister@tavi-port.nhs.uk)).

Yours sincerely



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Ethics Integrity Manager

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c.c. Mr Malcolm Allen, Dean of Postgraduate Studies, Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust
Mr Will Bannister, Associate Director, Education and Training, Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust
Professor John J Joughin, Vice-Chancellor, University of East London
Professor Neville Punchard, Chair of the University of East London Research Ethics Committee
Dr Alan White, Director of the Graduate School, University of East London
Mr David G Woodhouse, Associate Head of Governance and Legal Services