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NQSWs' experiences of the ASYE across the North-east of England Teaching Partnership (NESWA)



Presenters:

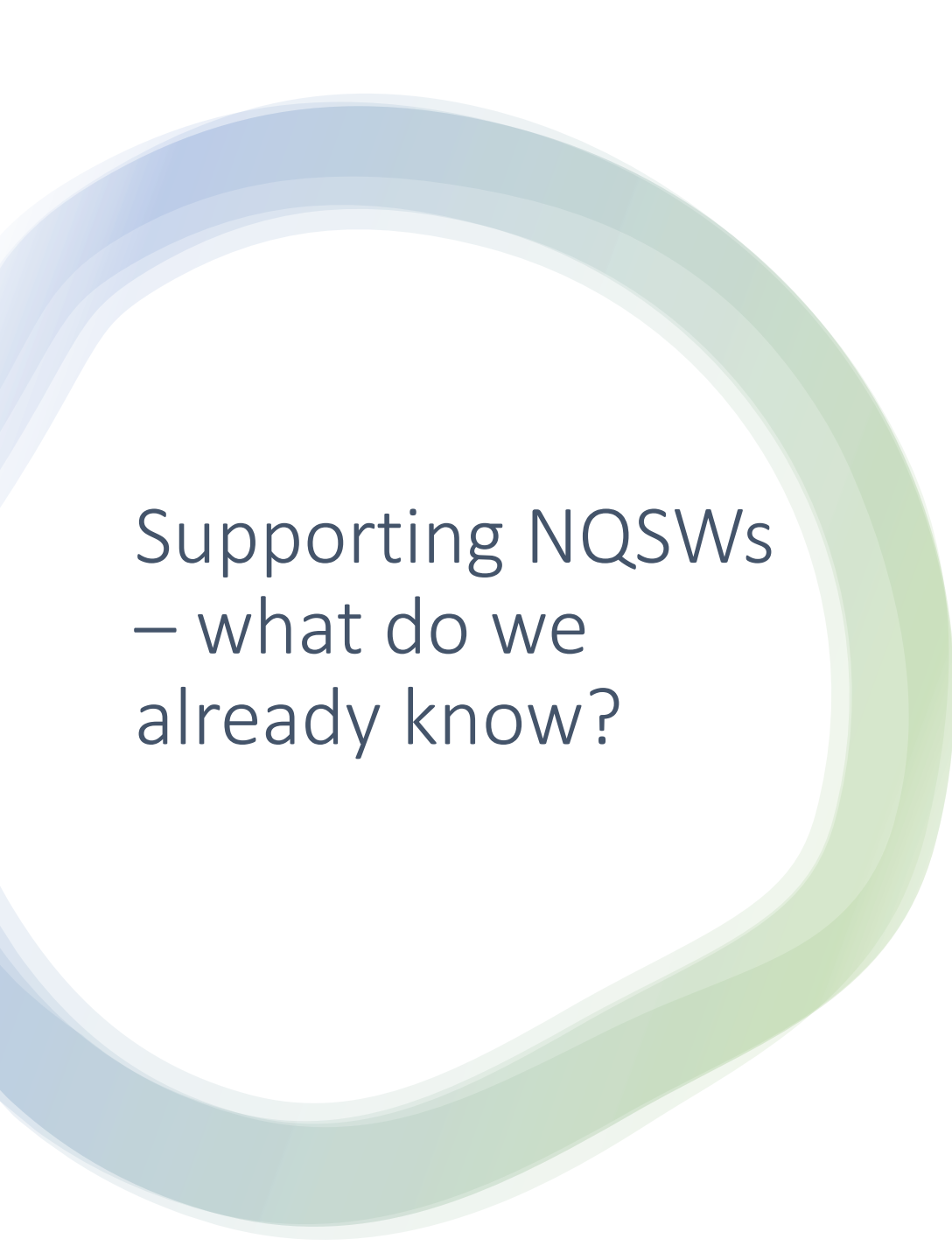
- **Dr Lesley Deacon**, VC's RKE Fellow, Senior Lecturer in Social Work (virtual)
- **Carrie Phillips**, Senior Lecturer in Social Work (in-person)



Introduction



- We will present findings from a small-scale exploratory study conducted by a cohort of practitioners and academics in the North-east of England.
- The aim of the study was to understand Newly Qualified Social Workers' (NQSWs) perceptions and experiences of support during the Assessed and Supported Year of Employment (ASYE).



Supporting NQSWs – what do we already know?

- Social Worker is a protected professional title
- NQSWs – first year in employment, little consistency with support and experience.
 - Hussein et al. (2014) – 70% participants reported not receiving ‘regular’ supervision
 - Manthorpe et al. (2014) – struggle to find enough mentors for NQSWs.
 - Manthorpe et al. (2015) – supervision dominated by individual case management, personal development an *optional extra* (p.60)
- National Evaluation Criteria (NEC) set up in 2018 (initially social work with children, now includes adult and mental health social work)
- Consolidated into ASYE – Skills for Care



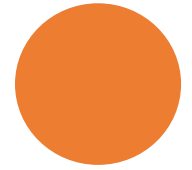
Assessed and Supported Year in Employment

- National framework to support NQSWs
- Aim to create clarity and consistency
- ‘12 month employer-led and employer-based programme of support and assessment’
- Learning Academy model – aim to prioritise learning alongside day-to-day work.

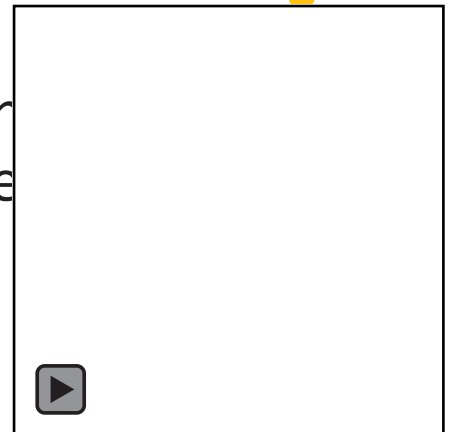
[Skills for Care](#)



Facilitated Practice-based Research (FPR) ©University of Sunderland



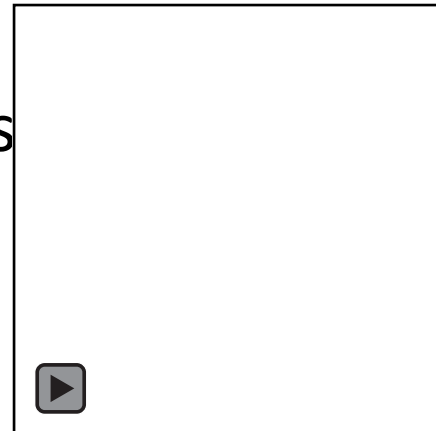
- FPR is an empowerment model, designed by Dr Lesley Deacon at the University of Sunderland
- It positions practitioners as researchers by reframing their existing skills as research.
- The key to this is making research make sense to practice by using practice language and temporarily moving aside research terminology.
- Practitioners work together as a group to reflect on practice issues and co-design and co-conduct a piece of **group practice research**.
- A practice report is co-constructed by the group which can then be shared across all partners for immediate implementation into practice





The cohort and the research

- From November 2022–October 2023 a cohort of practitioners worked together as a group to co-construct and implement a piece of practice-based research. (Accreditation: SWKM43 Reflexive Practice Research)
- Practitioners were from both Children’s and Adults’ Services from three different local authorities – Gateshead, Stockton and Darlington.
- The topic emerged from the practitioners’ shared experiences **understand how the ASYE is experienced by NQSWs.**



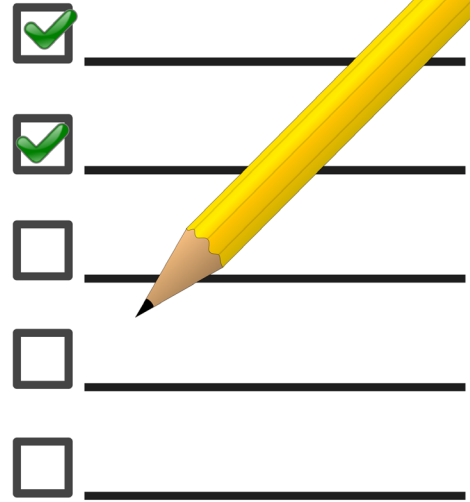
The research: pragmatic enquiry

Research questions

How do NQSWs perceive and experience the support given for the first year after qualifying?

- What type of support do NQSWs receive?
- What, according to social workers, has worked well and what needs development in the following areas:
 - Wellbeing;
 - Staff development;
 - Effective practice?





Method

- The research area was exploratory, so the use of a qualitative survey enabled access to the participant voice, and also enabled responses to be driven by the participants themselves rather than the researchers.
- Only five open questions were asked, to minimise the amount of time needed from participants to complete the survey.
- These questions specifically related to asking NQSWs about their perceptions and experiences of the ASYE.

Participants

- 23 surveys were completed by NQSWs (i.e. first year of employment post qualification).
- Participants confirmed they worked for one of the Local Authorities in the NESWA partnership (specific organisation name not requested).

Respondents

Route	Number of respondents
BA Hons Social Work	4
Frontline	0
MA Social Work	13
Social Work Apprenticeships	4
Step Up to Social Work	1
Think Ahead	0
Not Answered	1

Table 1: NQSW accreditation route

Findings

- Support

- NQSWs felt supported by receiving 'additional' supervision, protected caseloads (felt negatively if not received), access to work shadowing.
- ASYE Learning academy referred to positively as adding to feelings of being supported.

Academy set-up has
been superb (p18)

Findings

- Wellbeing was impacted on negatively by:
 - Workload including additional ASYE documentation
 - Case workload not protected

Paperwork feels more like a
box ticking exercise (p13)

Findings

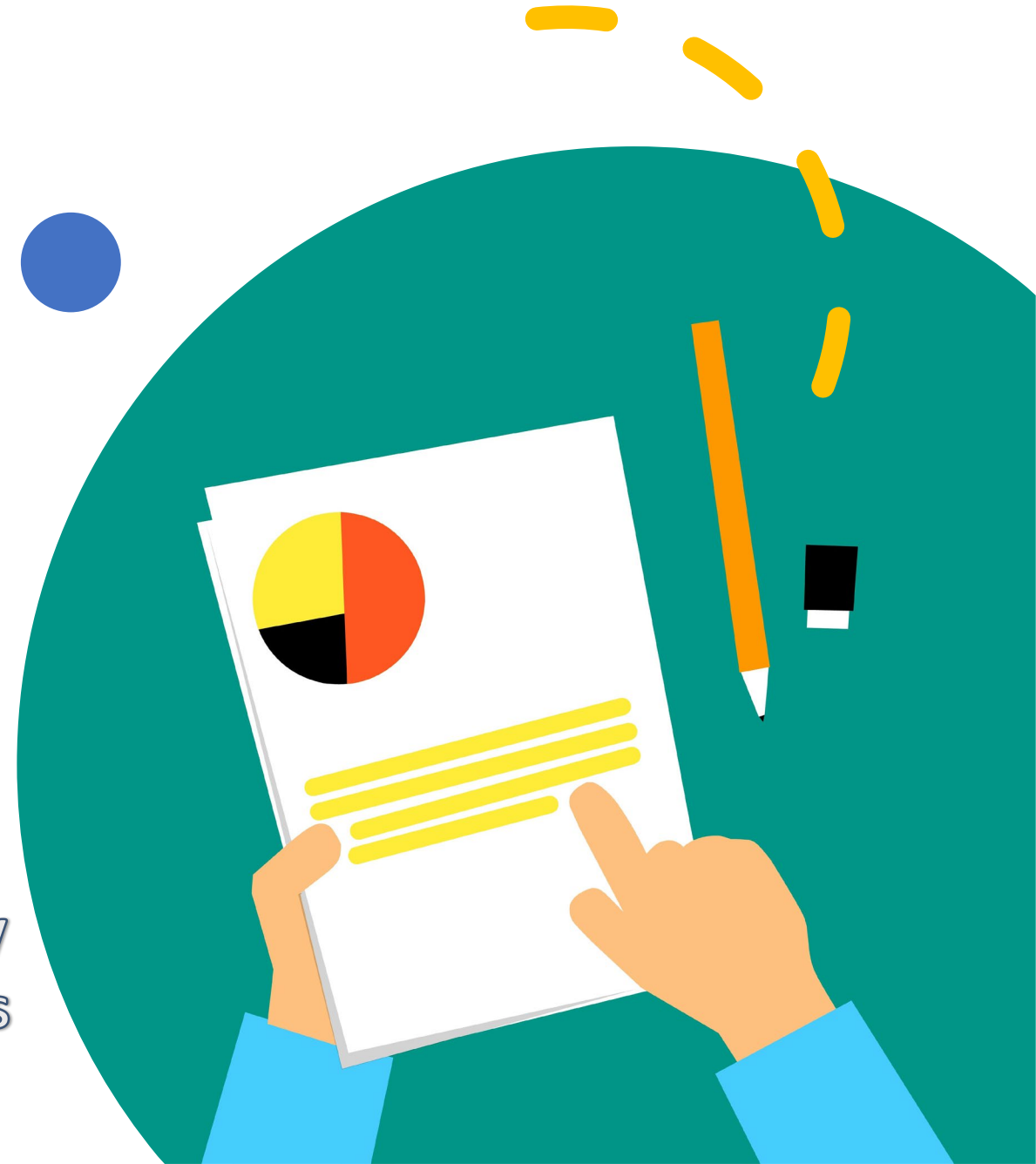
- Wellbeing was positively supported by having:
 - Regular, good quality supervision was seen to impact positively on wellbeing;
 - Access to manager's expertise and knowledge
 - Peer support
 - Access to learning opportunities e.g. work shadowing

It feels like everyone is in the same boat (p15)

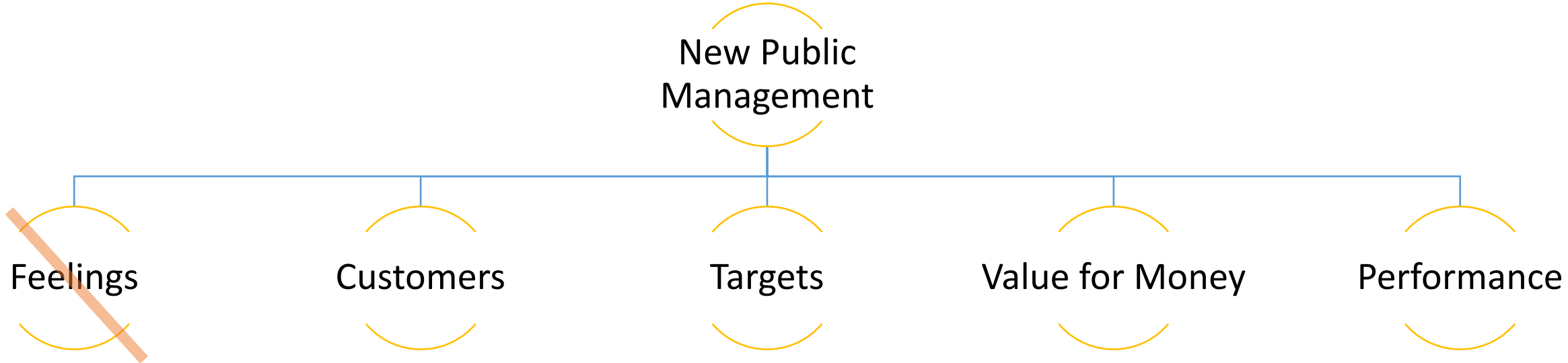
Report Recommendations

- Local Authorities in the NESWA partnership are encouraged to:
 - develop Learning Academies, as NQSWs talked positively about them;
 - ensure quality supervision above and beyond case management (this is being explored in the next cohort of practitioners); and
 - ensure protected caseloads (i.e. 90%) are being practiced for NQSWs during ASYE.
- Initial findings were shared with Skills for Care – NQSWs and Assessors forum, 2023.

Descriptive findings, not theoretically framed at this stage, so that data gets into practice more quickly



A Neoliberal Approach?

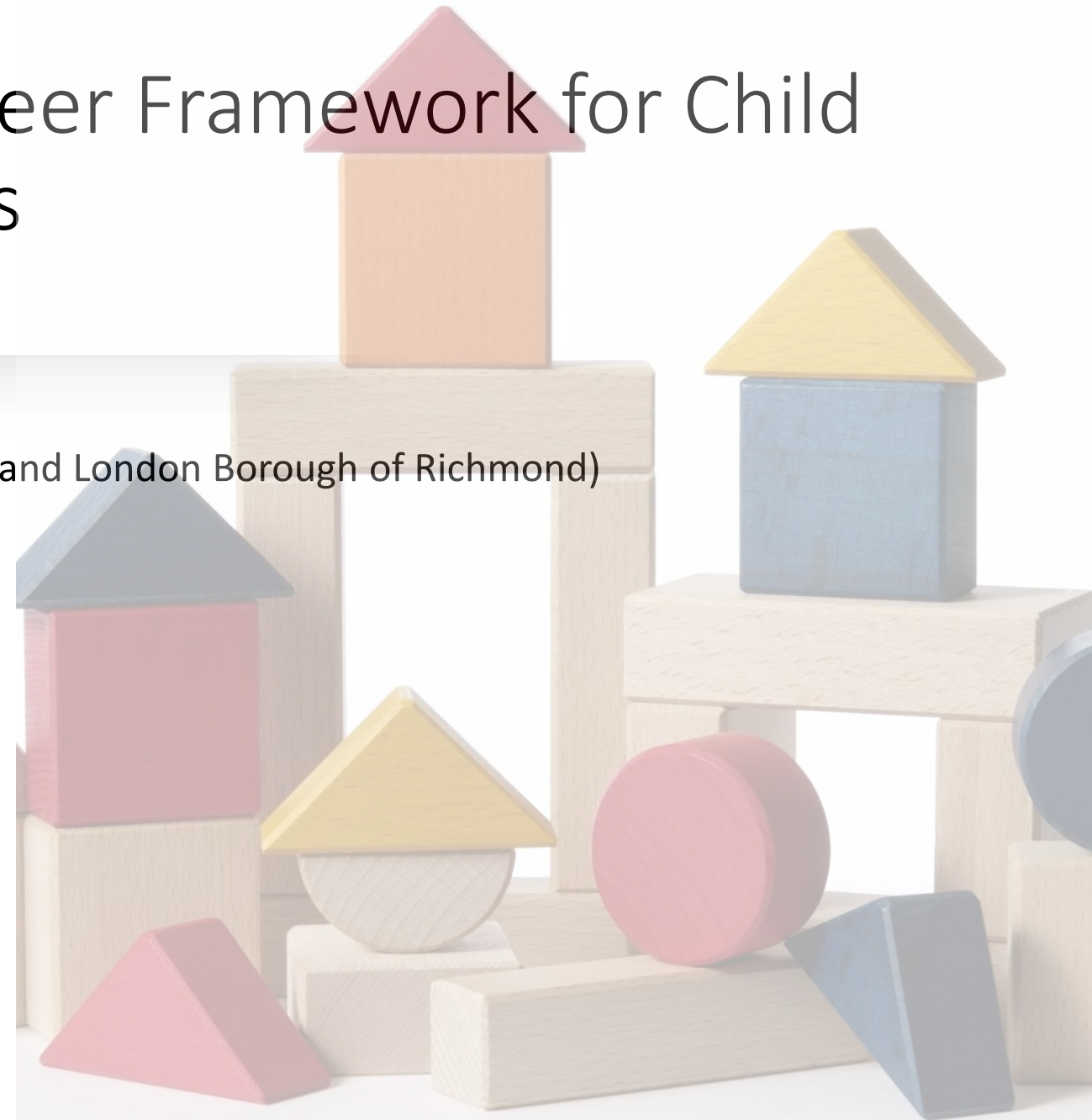


What next? The Early Career Framework for Child and Family Social Workers

Cohort 1

- Achieving for Children (Royal Borough of Kingston and London Borough of Richmond)
- Birmingham
- East Sussex
- Gloucestershire
- Plymouth
- Stockport
- Together for Children (Sunderland)
- Tower Hamlets

First cohort evaluation due 2028



Thank
you!

For listening...

Any questions?

References

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