

Understanding Child Protection Errors: Fine Judgments

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(TOTAL: **£205.62**) per place
(to include all refreshments and training materials)

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Child Protection
Assessment Following
Serious Injuries
to Infants
Fine Judgments

**20% discount on this Book
at the Conference.**

Peter Dale, Richard Green
and Ron Fellows

NSPCC
Child Protection Services, 100, Victoria Road, London W12 0NS

Terms and Conditions of Booking

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Please note: We will not be liable for delegates being unable to attend due to disruption of transport or strike action.

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one day
conference

Understanding Child Protection Errors: Fine Judgments

**Wednesday, 24th May, 2006
at Friends House, Euston, London**

Two recent books written by **Peter Dale, Richard Green** and **Ron Fellows** highlight the need for improvements in child protection practice:

- *Child Protection Assessment Following Serious Injuries to Infants: Fine Judgments (2005)*
- *What Really Happened? Child Protection Case Management of Infants with Serious Injuries and Discrepant Parental Explanations (2002)*

Drawing on research projects and practice-based evidence, this conference will focus on improving the consistency and quality of child protection assessment practice in two crucial ways, in particular:

- Infants need more effective protection from sources of real risk
- Child protection systems need to be more vigilant in not intervening in disproportionate and damaging ways

Major themes of the conference will be:

- Identifying family factors that are indicative of future high risk
- Clarifying assessment practice skills, with a particular focus on potential for change
- Exploring how therapeutically-inclined assessment approaches can reduce the number of contested care proceedings final hearings

Speakers

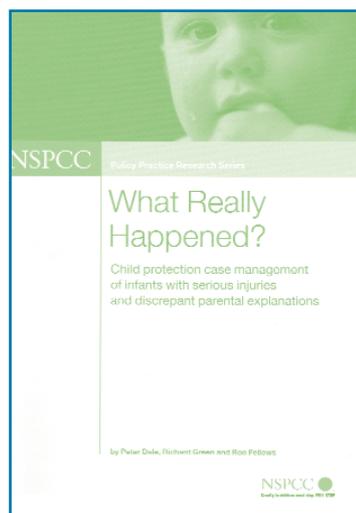
■ **Dr Peter Dale**
*Understanding Child Protection Errors
Reducing Child Protection Errors*

■ **Richard Green**
*NSPCC Research Into Cases of Serious
Injury with Discrepant Explanations*

■ **Ron Lock**
*Lessons from Recent Chapter 8/
Serious Case Reviews*

■ **Ron Fellows**
*Potential For Change in Child
Protection Assessments*

■ **John Gumbleton**
*Working with Parental Denial - the
'Resolutions' Approach*



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NSPCC
Ready to listen and act. 116116

Who should attend:

The conference will be of primary interest to

- local authority social workers and managers
- children's guardians
- independent social workers
- social work trainers
- family law solicitors/barristers
- health professionals involved in child protection
- voluntary agencies involved in family support
- member agencies of Local Safeguarding Children Boards

EARLY BOOKING DISCOUNT

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The Speakers

Dr Peter Dale trained originally as a psychiatric social worker and subsequently as a counsellor. His PhD research was a qualitative study focused on therapeutic experiences of adults who were abused as children. He worked in child and family psychiatric services before joining the NSPCC in 1980, where he was a practitioner, manager and Senior Research Officer until 2002. An established researcher and author, Peter Dale now acts as an independent social work expert witness in care proceedings throughout the UK - specialising in cases where there are serious suspicious injuries to infants. He is an individual member of The Expert Witness Institute and principal author of the book: *Child Protection Assessment Following Serious Injuries to Infants: Fine Judgments*. For further information visit: www.peterdale.co.uk .

Ron Fellows trained originally as a social worker and subsequently as a family/brief therapist. He is a UKCP registered family therapist. Ron Fellows worked in mental health and children and family services for various London boroughs. Since joining the NSPCC he has held posts as a practitioner and manager. He worked as a practitioner and latterly managed the NSPCC East Sussex Independent Assessment service which operated from 1986-2000. This service provided independent assessments in over 300 complex child protection cases. In 1989 he established the joint NSPCC/NCH Brief Therapy Team, a solution focused preventive service for children and their families. He continues to practice in and manage this service. For 15 years, until 2002, he practiced in and latterly managed the NSPCC East Sussex counselling service for adults who were abused as children. He is co-author of the book *Fine Judgments*.

A message from the conference will be that professionals and courts must strive more consistently to avoid two types of error that can have disastrous consequences for children and families:

- False negative errors: where child protection interventions are insufficient to protect children from further serious harm. At worst, this can result in fatal re-abuse.
- False positive errors: where child protection interventions are mistaken or disproportionate. At worst, this can result in unnecessary compulsory adoptions.

Richard Green qualified as a social worker in 1982 and a family therapist in 1990. He has held a number of posts in local authorities and the NSPCC, including practitioner, manager and evaluation officer. He is currently employed as a Senior Consultant in the NSPCC, consulting to statutory and voluntary agencies on a range of safeguarding issues. These include reviews of threshold decisions, reviews of multi-agency assessment practice, audits of services to disabled/deaf children, the chairing and authoring of case reviews, evaluations of safeguarding services within education and assistance to ACPCs as they make the transformation to LSCBs. He is co-author of the book *Fine Judgments*.

Ron Lock is a qualified social worker with 30 years' experience in child protection social work in a variety of practitioner, specialist and senior management roles, before becoming an independent child protection consultant and trainer in early 2001. For eight years prior to becoming independent, Ron was the Head of Children's Services for the NSPCC in the Home Counties Region. As an independent consultant, Ron has specialised in the role of chairing and advising on Serious Case Reviews, completing approximately 30 to date. He has also provided a range of advice, quality assurance and policy development services to statutory and voluntary agencies on child protection matters. Ron has delivered training to a range of professional groups in respect of the management of child protection and is also an Associate Consultant for the NSPCC.

John Gumbleton is a child protection consultant in private practice providing expert opinion in child protection cases before the Court. He also undertakes therapeutic work with families. He has 27 years' experience of working with children and families in residential, fieldwork and therapeutic settings. He has worked predominantly in child protection, including over ten years at the NSPCC in Bristol where he helped develop the Resolutions service, which specialised in working with parents "in denial". He teaches at Bristol University and holds the Advanced Award in Social Work, an MSc in Child Welfare and a Diploma in Family and Systemic Therapy.

Programme

9.30 Registration and coffee

10.00 **Welcome from the Chair**
(Ron Lock)

10.10 **Understanding Child Protection Errors**

Dr Peter Dale

This keynote presentation will examine the nature of the two main types of child protection error: a) false negative errors (inadequate protection resulting in re-abuse) and b) false positive errors (disproportionate professional interventions which cause harm to children and families). The significance of both types of error will be highlighted by research findings and practice illustrations.

11.00 Break & Coffee

11.30 **NSPCC Research Into Cases of Serious Injury With Discrepant Explanations**

Richard Green

This presentation will focus on research undertaken by the NSPCC on child protection case management of cases where infants sustain serious injuries and where parent/carer explanations are either absent, or are discrepant with expert medical opinion. The research draws upon two samples: a) 'Chapter 8 Reviews' of fatalities (where child protection interventions were inadequate), and b) a clinical sample (which resulted in a significant proportion of successful reunifications).

12.10 **Lessons From Recent Serious Case Reviews**

Ron Lock

This presentation will consider what has been learnt from the 30 Serious Case Reviews that Ron Lock has chaired from July 2001 to the end of 2005. From these findings, there will be a focus on how and when child protection errors sometimes occur, as well as identifying key components for effective child protection interventions.

12.45 **Questions & Discussion**

1.00 Lunch

2.00 **Reducing Child Protection Errors**

Dr Peter Dale

This keynote presentation will highlight issues in child protection practice and case management that are crucial in minimising the occurrence of both types of child protection error. The major focus will be on stressing the importance of undertaking high quality therapeutically-oriented assessments of families and identifying the key areas where assessment bias resulting in errors can arise.

2.50 **Questions & Discussion**

3.00 Break & Tea

3.20 **Potential For Change in Child Protection Assessments**

Ron Fellows

The UK government document *The Assessment Framework* emphasises the importance of assessing potential for change - but how can this best be done, and what can change? This presentation focuses on an NSPCC study of a clinical sample of 160 independent assessments and highlights practice issues that affect the crucial assessment question of potential for change.

4.00 **The 'Resolutions' Approach**

John Gumbleton

This presentation continues the theme of assessment of potential for change in child protection assessments where 'parental denial' is a major factor. The 'Resolutions' approach to assessment and working therapeutically with families will be outlined and illustrated with brief case examples, including outcome results regarding children that have returned home.

4.35 **Questions/discussion**

(Chair, Ron Lock)

4.45 End of conference