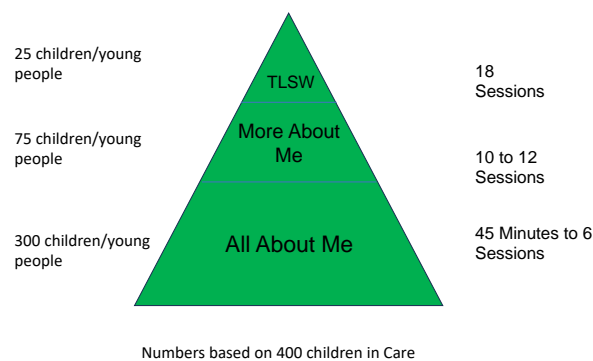




An Open Letter to the ASGSF, Regional Adoption Agencies and all other Commissioners from Therapeutic Life Story Work International.

The recent announcement that funding of essential therapeutic intervention for children and young people living with their families who are adopted or subject to special guardianship is to be cut by 40% for each child is devastating. We have seen reactions from agencies representing families and organisations protesting this cut, and we add our voice to these actions. At the heart of all intervention services are the children, young people and their carers and many are now asking what next? TLSWi (TLWuk) are being constantly asked how we can provide a service under the new 'allowance' and so, with the intention of proactive response, not shadowing our dismay at the ill-informed decision (as we know, no providers were asked what the impact of such a cut would be), the following guidance is offered.

The Rose Model of Therapeutic Life Story Work (evidence based) consists of three stages – All About Me for every child in care or in families such as kinship/guardian/adoption; More About Me, for a child who has been impacted by events in their past that cause challenges for their present and then TLSW for a child that has experienced high levels of trauma (relational and/or developmental) that has its roots in the previous generations, or through early life trauma that has no voice. In our training throughout the World, we use a simple triangle that identifies the ratio of children to each intervention. Using an example of 400 children who may be in some form of care arrangement, 300 would benefit from their carers providing All About Me books every 6 months of the travel through care – this ensures that the story of every child is kept safe and builds, on leaving care, a book that holds their journey. In my experience, some children will need help to make sense of their situation, and More About Me provides this opportunity to the child and their carers to connect the past to the present, and in making sense of their fragmented lives, can move forward free from the hurts of the past. This intervention is delivered by trained practitioners over 10 – 12 sessions and we often refer to this as 'One generation challenges'. Out of every 400 children, I suggest 75 would benefit from the intervention. There are some that need more support and information that require previous generations of trauma and the impact of these experiences on parents and grandparents who may have not consequently had the capacity to meet the needs of their grandchildren/children. This work is intensive, and explores intergenerational trauma, development and cultural trauma. It will take 18 to 20 sessions and the results have been incredibly successful – described as transformational by Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia. In my experience, 25 out of every 400 children will benefit from this approach.



With the decision of the Labour Government, I have spent the last 2 weeks trying to figure out what we can cut, change, rework and then the reality hit – our children, young people and their families don't deserve to have a cut down service, an intervention designed around a £ sign and so TLSW cannot be provided for £3000 per child. We recognise that some may wish to do this, and I have informed those thousands that I have trained that they cannot call this the Rose Model, I Trade Marked and Registered the model, not for licensing fees but for fidelity and protecting the model. Remember, that the previous FAL (Fair Usage Level) was £5000 in 2016/17 and has not risen in line with inflation, it has been static for 8 years – we as providers have managed this without compromising the intervention (even when travel time payments were removed and mileage reduced to a level where most contribute to the journey to see their children and young people). We cannot manage a 40% reduction and safely practice the TLSW 18 sessions. However, where it may be needed, joint funding from health, education and social care, EHCP and Pupil Premium could be possible. It has been suggested that we ask carers to make up the shortfall – that is inappropriate and is contrary to all we hold dear.

What we can do, and currently provide is More About Me, and this we can deliver within the FAL of £3000 – in consultation with TLSWuk and our members, we can make this work. My suggestion is that funding is provided for More About Me and an assessment at the end as to whether a 'top up' to the TLSW is funded the following year. In two-thirds of the cases, it should not be needed and children and young people will have the opportunity to heal through their narrative. For our colleagues in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, where ASGSF is not provided, you have found ways to develop this work and in Scotland, the Promise does provide some options.

After 28 years of developing, training and delivering the model, I know how much difference we make to children and young people - it actually saves so much money, as many children do not go on to need resources that were identified as healing of fracturing family placement and education placements occur (£11 million saved in one LA and £1.8 million in another (one worker only)).

Investing in our children is so much more cost effective, emotionally rewarding and healing than paying for our failure to our children and young people that provide our next generation of children needing to be looked after.

Please visit www.tlswi.com and www.theia.ac for more information and access to research, articles, videos and testimonies.

We wanted to offer a pathway to meet the needs of children, young people and families without undermining the fundamentally flawed decision to reduce the fund so drastically; it is a difficult route, but I hope the above provides clarity for all.

Professor Richard Rose
AAP
Therapeutic Life Story Work International
THEiA

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