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Working Together, or Keeping Apart?

A critical discourse analysis of the revised Working Together guidance (2013)

Abstract

This article gives an account of a discourse analysis in which a section of revised Government policy, *Working Together to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children*, was subjected to Critical Discourse Analysis. Setting out the context in which the policy was published, this paper outlines the recent policy context and articulates the chosen method of critical discourse analysis to undertake a small study in relation to the revised *Working Together* and discusses the findings of the analysis. It offers an insight into how the issue of child protection is understood, managed and made tolerable, through the policy's discourse. It concludes that the revised documentation, a result of Munro's review of child protection (2011), fails to adequately acknowledge the complexity involved in protecting and safeguarding children.

Introduction

In 2012, the Government consulted on reforming the child protection system in England, reducing over 700 pages of guidance to 68. The nine-month consultation process provoked strong views with multiple revisions occurring. The final version focuses strongly on legislative requirements removing much non-statutory guidance that existed hitherto and is intended to reduce the burden on professionals obligated to follow the prescriptive procedures criticised by Munro in her review of child protection (2011). The Government's intention in removing good practice guidance is that it will be developed locally.

Having worked in a local authority subject to an inquiry following the death of a child and the subsequent high profile media attention that follows, I have been interested in the subsequent emerging policy landscape in recent years. With the review of child protection by Munro (2011) and its recommendation to remove the bureaucratic, heavily proceduralised nature of social work by simplifying and reducing *Working Together to Safeguard Children in Need and their Families* and *the Framework of Assessment for Children in Need and their Families*, I was curious to know if this change will have the desired result

of freeing professionals from the degree of prescription on how to undertake their role, using judgement and flexibility. I was also intrigued about whether this reduction in Government control really indicates a 'confidence in the sector to take more responsibility' (Munro, 2012:10) or if there may be other agendas at play. I therefore decided to subject the revised guidance to a critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2001; Parker, 2005) and interrogate a section of this guidance in an attempt to gain a deeper understanding this policy is and its impact on practice.

The choice to use a Critical Discourse Analysis was appealing because it is informed by Foucault's ideas about how discourse is related to the production of knowledge through language at a particular historical moment (Hall, 2001). Foucauldian ideas about the relationship between power and knowledge and how power operates within institutional apparatus seemed to provide a relevant framework with which to critique recent changes to government policy around child protection.

Context

Following the death of Peter Connelly in Haringey in 2008 (described by the media as Baby P), there was a re-emphasis on the centrality of child protection in government safeguarding policy (Parton, 2011). The political response included *Working Together* (2010), which, at 390 pages long, amounted to an increase of almost 160 pages, signalling further statutorily, procedurally defined roles and responsibilities. Synchronous to this, the Social Work Taskforce's review of the profession was critical of managerialist policy developments that had resulted in social work practice being subject to over proceduralised guidance implemented alongside electronic IT systems such as the Integrated Children's System (ICS). Thus, the changes introduced in response to previous social work failings, had exacerbated the situation by curtailing the professional autonomy of social workers who spent more time inputting data into ICS than with children and families. The coalition government, elected in 2010, set out its key priorities as reducing public spending, the role of the state and the performance management regime of New Labour. The Secretary of State for Education commissioned a Review of Child Protection by Professor Eileen Munro to focus on early intervention, trusting front line social workers and transparency and accountability

(Parton, 2011) so that social workers would be better placed to 'make well-informed judgements...free from unnecessary bureaucracy and regulation' (Gove, 2010: 1).

Munro's review also identified the ways in which successive changes following child deaths, had sought to overburden social workers with excessive regulation. Her final report made 15 recommendations including:

'The Government should revise both the statutory guidance, *Working Together to Safeguard Children* and *The Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families*' (Munro, 2011: 45).

This recommendation aimed to remove 'constraints to local innovation and professional judgement that are created by prescribing or endorsing particular approaches, for example, nationally designed assessment forms, national performance indicators associated with assessment of nationally prescribed approaches to IT systems' (Munro, 2011: 45).

Method

Fairclough (2001) and Parker (2005), suggest a step-by-step model for undertaking a critical discourse analysis (CDA). Using aspects from both approaches to inform my analysis I focused on those that fitted well with analysing government policy. Fairclough (2001) contends that CDA enables one to move between close analysis of texts and interactions and social analyses of varying kinds with a view to uncovering how language figures in social processes. Its objective of showing non-obvious ways in which language is involved in social relations of power and ideology underpins the 'critical' aspect. This appealed to me as I aimed to make sense of how the government implements changes to child protection practice. CDA developed out of Western Marxist perspectives on society, specifically in relation to how domination and exploitation is established and maintained culturally and ideologically (Fairclough, 2001). Drawing on the work of Althusser (1971) who saw ideologies as positioning people as social subjects and Foucault (1972) who saw 'discourses as systems of knowledge that inform the social and governmental technologies which constitute power in modern society' (Fairclough, 2001: 223), CDA seeks to address the major problems which people face at specific points in time. Using this approach, I shall aim to demonstrate how, through discourse, issues of safeguarding and child protection are

constructed by the government to manage and control risk, at this juncture in political and social life.

Analysis

Fairclough (2001) suggests identifying the network of social practices in which the subject under scrutiny is located. Child protection policy is located primarily in government and politics but is also linked to practices in the economic domain and everyday family life. The context in which the new *Working Together* guidance has been published is important to consider. Since the coalition government took office there have been major shifts in political practices with austerity, public spending cuts and welfare reform central to emerging policy. The relationship between government, the management of social life by the state and how public money is spent is also at the heart of government vision. The Coalition made clear its intentions to reduce state intervention, control and monitoring whilst taking a rigorous approach to reducing the deficit. Alongside this, it continues the New Labour drive towards localism and partnership between government, business and the voluntary and independent sectors with power being devolved to local communities. In relation to *Working Together*, the Government can demonstrate its commitment to Munro's recommendation of removing central government control by freeing up social workers from prescription and passing responsibility to Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCBs). Whilst seeming to give power and responsibility to those closer to the ground and thereby, social workers more freedom, it also distances the government from responsibilities of child protection. This may be seen as creating conditions where the government could redirect responsibility and culpability to respective local areas when inevitable mistakes arise in the future.

There is a clear discourse of localism in *Working Together* (2013). The introduction emphasises the importance of 'effective safeguarding systems as those where ... local areas innovate' and the guidance sets out 'key elements of effective local arrangements for safeguarding' (DfE, 2013: 8-9). It outlines how 'Local authorities, with their partners, should develop and publish local protocols for assessment' (chapter 1). I remain sceptical that a move from national to local procedures will bring about any significant change. The London Child Protection Procedures currently amount to 550 pages and there is no evidence that

locally, reduced procedures are desired. This could mean that in the absence of national guidance multiple sets of local procedures will exist, creating difficulties when families move across areas, an increasing likelihood with recently implemented benefit capping. If a move to local guidance does not achieve what was central to Munro's recommendation of removing unnecessary bureaucracy and guidance, it begs the question what was the point, suggesting that perhaps there is another agenda.

Media influence

It is also worth noting the relationship between politics and the media. Following the death of Peter Connelly, Warner (2013) asks whether the moral story of Baby P is one that politicians and the press wrote together for mutual benefit. She contends that even by historical standards of media coverage following child deaths, the Baby P story was characterised by a complex, striking narrative. She cites Galilee who argues that bad news stories about social work in the UK serve the press and centre-right political parties due to increased sales and because they support wider ideological attacks on state welfare and the 'loony left' respectively (Galilee, 2005). In a documentary analysis of newspapers following the conviction of Baby P's killers, Warner cites David Cameron, then leader of the Conservative Party, in opposition, writing in the *London Evening Standard*, of 'systemic failure' which cannot be allowed to absolve anyone of responsibility 'as systems are made up of people and the buck needs to stop somewhere' (Cameron, 2008). Warner suggests Cameron's views position social workers as robotic bureaucrats who have become divorced from humane responses to suffering, somewhat ironic given that it is government policy that implemented bureaucratic procedural approaches to child protection and a discourse 'characterised by rationality' in the wake of child protection failings (Warner, 2013).

Locating *Working Together 2013* contextually in light of other political developments, there have been fundamental changes to wider government policy including the controversial bedroom tax, changes to legal aid, reductions to Council Tax benefit, Disability Living Allowance replaced by a Personal Independence Payment narrowing those eligible, benefit up-rating and a pending welfare benefit cap, ensuring welfare claimants will not receive more than the average household income. It is estimated that up to 80,000 households will be made homeless as a result of this (Guardian 3.4.13). The recent media frenzy about

'benefit scroungers' exacerbated following the conviction of Mick Philpott for the manslaughter of his children and reported to be in receipt of £53,000 per year according to the Daily Mail, led to the newspaper directly linking the killings to the welfare state (3.4.13). The Chancellor questioned whether the benefits system subsidised his lifestyle, a claim he was heavily criticised for in trying to make political capital out of this case at a time when the benefits cuts he presided over were coming into force.

Child protection or safeguarding?

Fairclough suggests that it is necessary to trace how communication is located in the procedural chains which turn a policy conception into institutional change. Social policy on child protection has fluctuated between discourses of child protection and safeguarding with New Labour policy developing a broader encapsulation of risk to children in which safeguarding widened the net of social control focusing on promoting the welfare of children (Parton, 2011). Since the Peter Connelly case however, he suggests a shift back to child protection occurred. Norman (2013) suggests that a view of compulsion as the exception is absent from the revised guidance and that the language does not empower families. There has been a shift from the rights of families to secure assessment to one in which:

"Each child who has been referred into local authority children's social care should have an individual assessment to respond to their needs and to understand the impact of any parental behaviour on them" (21).

A child in need assessment now sits alongside a child protection enquiry as a statutory assessment. Norman (2013) suggests that by what is said and left unsaid children and families' social work is being invited to behave as though all statutory social work is under compulsion, something he suggests is an infringement of article 8 of the Human Rights Act (1998) as interference has to be based on necessity or consent. Perhaps this is further evidence of risk-averse state intervention rather than reduced bureaucratic government control as recommended by Munro.

Presentation and style

As Government policy, *Working Together* is written with a very specific audience in mind, namely social work practitioners, managers and allied childcare professionals. Bakhtin (1986) maintains that texts are written with particular readers in mind and are geared towards and anticipate certain responses. The purpose of CDA is to show how semiotic, linguistic properties of a text connect with what is going on socially in the interaction (Fairclough, 2001). He infers that what is going on socially is in part, what is going on interdiscursively in the text, for instance, how it brings together particular genres and discourses. Thus, texts consist of choices of words and syntax.

Working Together is accompanied by a written ministerial statement by Edward Timpson. The guidance itself consists of an HM Government cover sheet with the title – *Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children*, March 2013. It spans 97 pages including appendices. It has a contents page, a summary outlining what the guidance covers and replaces (*Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010); the Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (2000) and Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 (2007)*). The summary sets out the status of the guidance - issued under section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act and sections 11 (4) and 16 of the Children Act 2004 stating that it comes into force from 15 April 2013 and 'should be complied with unless exceptional circumstances arise' (page 5). It outlines specifically who the guidance is for including senior representatives of children's Services and social workers who are all advised to 'read and follow the guidance' (page 6). A four page introduction is followed by five chapters: *Assessing need and providing help; Organisational responsibilities; Local Safeguarding Children's Boards; Learning and improvement framework and Child death reviews*. The three appendices include a *glossary, the statutory framework and further sources of information*.

Each chapter has a title in bold and the format consists of numbered paragraphs and sub-headings making it easy to read with a clear structure. As the entire document is almost 100 pages, I focus on part of chapter 1, from which I shall draw examples to support my analysis. The chapter has four sections in which the text is white on a black background making it

stand out significantly from the rest of the chapter. Three of these refer to differing sections of the Children Acts' 1989 and 2004 and the other is entitled *Response to a referral* in which it outlines what children's social care should do when receiving a referral.

Fairclough (2001) maintains that in analysing texts they should be seen in interactional terms. Analysis should involve identifying which genres and discourses are drawn upon in a text and 'syntagmatics' which is defined as 'denoting the relationship between two or more linguistic units used sequentially to make well-formed structures' (OED). The text in chapter 1, specifically pages 18-25, which I have focused on, is instructional and declarative rather than dialogical in tone. This is created through the frequent use of exhortation and injunction. Following consultation and revision, the final guidance now appears as one-way communication. For instance, the word 'should' is used 51 times in the eight pages and 'ensure' appears eight times. The genre is consistent with what would be ordinary in statutory government guidance with the expectancy of it being followed. As such, it includes descriptions of expectations of actions that should be undertaken such as 'the assessment should focus on the needs of the child and on the impact any services are having on the child' (18). There is also evidence of political rhetoric under the heading 'Local protocols for assessment' in which the Government's shift to decentralisation is articulated:

Local authorities, with their partners, should develop and publish local protocols for assessment. A local protocol should set out clear arrangements for how cases will be managed... and be consistent with the requirements of this statutory guidance. (24)

The eight pages read rather like a political speech that one can imagine a minister reading aloud to an audience, e.g. 'good assessments support professionals to understand whether a child has needs relating to their care or a disability....' (18).

Generally the guidance is written in the third person however, in the introduction, this shifts to the first person when the phrase 'our most vulnerable children' is used (8). This demonstrates the change from the professional discourse usually prevalent in the guidance to political propaganda where the word 'our' is used to bring emotion into the text and position the government alongside citizens or parents.

Children are generally portrayed passively throughout the guidance, although at the end of the introduction a black background and white text is used to set out children's views. Entitled 'Children have said what they need' (10), this section positions children as active, determining what their needs are and 'clear about what they want from an effective safeguarding system' (9). This is the only part of the guidance in which children's perspectives are included. King and Piper (1995) propose that the autopoietic (that is, the self-maintaining system, organisation or organism), nature of the law's discourse results in its utterances and understandings of the child as victim and as the parent as the direct or indirect cause of harm and this is borne out in the guidance. There is a paucity of voices notable through the absence of reported speech. Chapter one includes only the official government voice. Despite the many voices in the child protection field, the 23 subjects identified in the eight pages analysed are absent, as are academics, experts and the media. Twice 'research' is mentioned but is not identified or given a voice.

Straightforward guidance for a complex activity?

The guidance consists of declarations of good practice that different professionals should ensure happens. Structured solutions are offered for undertaking assessments, for example, principles and parameters of good assessment are identified on page 19. How this is to be achieved using the assessment triangle, is portrayed with a number of headings:

- The purpose of assessment
- Focusing on the views of the child
- Developing a clear analysis
- Focusing on outcomes
- Timeliness
- Local protocols for assessment

Throughout the text analysed, there is a common clause combination of simple, often short, single clause sentences such as 'every assessment should be child centred'. Even longer sentences are simple, e.g. 'A high quality assessment is one in which evidence is built and

revised throughout the process' (21). There are no compound or complex sentences. This has the effect of the guidance being read as a set of assertions or exhortations rather than a set of arguments. There is therefore no opportunity to disagree or consider other perspectives. It is as though this discourse is the only truth and therefore must be followed. Fairclough (2001) describes such text as paratactic, a literary technique that favours short, and simple sentences with the use of co-coordinating instead of subordinating conjunctions. The use of the black boxes and bullet points seeks to enhance the effect of this declarative style. The use of a listing syntax, Fairclough argues, prevents a text from being structured as an argument that is dialogical in nature engaging with readers, trying to convince them and in so doing, opening itself up to counter-argument. Listing syntax sets up a non-dialogical divide between those making the assertions and those they are addressed at (Fairclough, 2001). *Working Together*, written in this style, seems to avoid the complexity and ambiguity that is inherent in child protection practice. It is as if, by following these simple step-by-step instructions, errors and failures will be avoided, when all social workers reading the guidance know this will never be the case. The only exception to this is paragraph 44 which states that:

'No system can ever fully eliminate risk. Understanding risk involves judgement and balance' (22).

This is the only part of the guidance analysed in which the messiness, difficulty and complexity of assessing children's safety is acknowledged. Paragraph 46 states that:

'A desire to think the best of adults and to hope they can overcome their difficulties should not trump the need to rescue children from chaotic, neglectful and abusive homes' (22).

This sentence alludes to, but does not explicitly engage in, the challenges of keeping the child at the centre when working with families with multiple difficulties, who may be articulate, charming, evasive, or manipulative. The sentence is clumsy and lacks clarity. The use of the word trump is interesting as it has connotations of card games and competition.

All of the sentences in the eight pages analysed are declarative rather than interrogative, imperative or exclamatory (Fairclough, 2001). Modality, in CDA, refers to the marking of

degrees of commitment to truth. The very first paragraph on page 18 consists of judgments and opinions but these are not marked by 'modalising expressions' such as 'in our opinion' (Fairclough, 2001). The sense is of a government in control of this complex, risk-laden area of society and driving a process that is straightforward.

The child is constructed as having many needs and being at risk at the hands of its parents. There is little, if any, acknowledgement of the risk posed by anyone else. The guidance has been criticised by BASW and the Children's Rights Alliance for omitting many areas of risk such as child sexual exploitation. *Working Together 2010* contained a chapter on how best to identify and protect child victims of trafficking however, the revised guidance only has one reference in the appendices. It is criticised further for removing an essential safety net for children when they are failed by their local authority (Community Care, April 2012) by overly focusing on child protection and ignoring the larger group of children who have significant needs but are not at immediate risk of abuse such as those with disabilities.

The discourses

In order to identify the different discourses in the document Parker (2005) suggests that by systematically itemising the objects that appear in the text and what they might signify, one is better placed to piece together the type of world the text presupposes. I identified over 150 nouns in the eight pages which I grouped together in themes to identify the following discourses that hold them together:

Legal; assessment; risk; child-centred; welfare; professional; organisational; familial; developmental and political.

The subjects

Similarly, I itemised all of the subjects in the document ranging from children, parents, professionals, social workers, the community, referrers and families. The guidance positions each of these subjects within the context of child protection practice in which the child and parents are seen as passive recipients of the actions of the professionals, usually social workers. These professionals are brought to life in the guidance through the use of transitive verbs whereby the processes outlined are actional and the social worker acts

upon a goal. The child, parent or family is acted upon, often portrayed as goals or beneficiaries in processes, for instance:

‘Practitioners should be rigorous in assessing and monitoring children at risk of neglect to ensure they are adequately safeguarded over time’ (18) and:

‘The social worker should analyse all the information gathered from the enquiry stage of the assessment to decide the nature and level of the child’s needs and the level of risk, if any, they may be facing’ (21).

Parker (2005) suggests that analysis should involve a reconstruction of what each subject may say within the framework of rules presupposed by the text. The most frequently mentioned subjects are the child, the parents and the social worker. Parents might say that this framework is disempowering and oppressive, placing the emphasis on child protection when support is required not because children are at risk of harm but because they have significant needs due to poverty or disability, for instance. Children may feel that the guidance gives reduced prominence to the involvement of children during assessment and within the child protection process. The absence of the presumption that the child, subject to age and understanding, should be invited to attend their conference with an advocate if they would like to, providing evidence of this. Other than the acknowledgment that assessments for some children e.g. those with disabilities, will require particular care (20) and that ‘family structures, culture, religion, ethnic origins...should be respected’ (21), the guidance pays scant attention to issues of diversity. This may be due to an expectation that this will be addressed in local practice guidance however, social policy has been viewed as blind to the racialised or gendered nature of the subject it assumed (Williams, 1989).

Social workers may say that the new guidance does not free them up from bureaucracy as the prescription remains, simply transferring from central to local decision making bodies. In the guidance the social worker is represented as needing to be ‘rigorous’, ‘decisive’, ‘analytic’, ‘child-centred’ and ‘reflective’. It is hard to imagine social workers disagreeing with the importance of such qualities and skills. However, the guidance, in its simply structured syntactic way, views the world of practice as ordered and straightforward where

social workers receive supervision that supports them to reflect critically on the impact of their decisions and their assumptions are challenged by managers. Many social workers will struggle to recognise this view of social work practice identifying more with Horwath's description in which organisational and workforce issues have a negative impact on the quality of assessment practice in which managers and practitioners may be more focused on achieving targets than the quality of the assessment (Horwath, 2011). She cites an Ofsted (2008) finding that failure to maintain the focus of the child was the most common practice failing, partly attributed to organisations over-emphasising procedures and compliance rather than more fundamental issues such as quality supervision, staff development and staffing levels.

Denial of complexity?

Research into child protection practice identifies a lack of focus on children's needs as a result of parental hostility, lack of co-operation, good parental engagement, complex and pressing adult issues and needs and agency neglect. However, such issues are not adequately referred to in the guidance nor given a space in the political and governmental policy discourse (Brandon et al., 2009; Rose and Barnes, 2007). Research into the experiences of practitioners using the Assessment Framework, concludes that if Munro's recommendations are to make any difference, changing systems alone will not change minds (Horwath, 2011). She contends that the impact of the policy and practice context of the last ten years needs to be addressed, the challenge being to change the organisational culture in which front line social workers function. Whilst *Working Together* 2013 reduces the level of central prescription it is likely to result in a shift of procedural control to local government. This may not reduce the burdensome nature of procedures as local areas decide what practice guidance to retain.

In issuing this guidance the government sets out what it expects to happen and how. It does not provide an opportunity for discussion about why historically, such procedures are not always followed. In their analysis of the Laming Report into the Victoria Climbié Inquiry, Cooper and Lousada (2005) suggest a more searching inquiry would ask why procedures were not followed. They suggest that whilst necessary, procedures are surface instruments capable only of guiding practitioners towards the relevant point of contact with the deeper,

more complex, and ambiguous realities that need to be engaged with in child protection practice. Whilst the government has sought to reduce the level of prescription that has now been accepted as driving, not supporting, social work practice, the policy remains at the surface, and does not move forward the discussion of why social workers and other professionals may not follow procedures. As Cooper (2009) elucidates in later work, 'emotional realities are routinely sanitised by policy discourse' (Cooper, 2009: 170). He refers to the complex picture below the surface in which deep anxieties about responsibility for death and damage are rationally managed as opposed to being faced and tolerated. The revised *Working Together* fails to acknowledge the limits of policy instead promulgating 'omnipotent solutions to all life's ills and anxieties' (Cooper, 2009: 180) and therefore, the institutions charged at protecting children will continue to be organized systems of defence against anxiety (Hoggett, 2000).

Behind the backdrop of a government desire to 'cut red tape' there perhaps lies a deeper, more unsettling agenda of localism, decentralisation and rolling back the state in family life. Davies et al. (2012) suggest that there is no evidence that reduced prescription will have a positive impact on child protection and that Parton (2011) only argued for a distinction between the statutory and non-statutory aspects of the guidance rather than a reduction per se. He did not suggest tampering with statutory guidance. Citing the most common criticism of professional practice as being professional non-compliance, they suggest the answer is not to abolish the guidance but to ensure professionals have training and safe working environments to enable compliance with it. Moreover, a shift to local guidance will, they argue, lead to postcode lotteries, confusion in co-ordination and communication across boundaries, compounded by increased privatization and cuts to welfare provision. Furthermore a lack of prescription may be seen as an invitation to cut further the most basic services.

Conclusion

Whilst undertaking this analysis has enabled me to engage deeply in thinking below the surface in relation to emerging government child protection policy it does have its limitations. The discourses identified are my discourses however, a very clear methodology was followed, one which could be replicated easily by another researcher undertaking a

similar exercise. These are only my viewpoints and will be affected by my social, cultural and political identities. My claims are made on the basis of a small selection of the entire guidance and I may have missed much of what was included or omitted in other parts of the document. Nonetheless, it has enabled a deep exploration of part of the guidance and placed this within a current political context.

This small piece of analytical research has enabled a number of discourses to be identified in *Working Together* in which the Government sets out what it expects to happen in child protection and how. It has identified that the policy process provides little opportunity for discussion about this complex, messy area of social life. Munro clearly sets out how the increased procedural guidance relating to child protection has deprofessionalised child protection, yet the reduced guidance retains a clear ideological discourse of a child protection professional largely able to eliminate risk if the procedures are adhered to rather than using their professional judgment about children. Munro identifies from her Review working group the principles which should inform child protection work, including being explicit that the system and the wider public need to acknowledge the uncertainty and risk that inevitably surrounds child protection. As the discourse analysis identifies, this acknowledgement is made once in the section of the guidance subjected to analysis and fails to address the important issue that:

‘Those involved in child protection must be ‘risk sensible’. There is no option of being risk averse since there is no absolutely safe option. In reality, risk averse practice usually entails displacing the risk onto someone else’ (Munro, 2011: 43).

Despite Munro’s identification of prescriptive, tightly defined risk and performance management techniques being developed in an attempt to defend against the uncertainties of cases, fears of inaccurate decision-making and public criticism (Lees et al., 2013), the optimism created by her focus on anxiety and containment has not been met by the revised *Working Together* which has shifted control from central to local government. Whilst this revision in policy attempted to reduce defensive, procedure-led systems:

Developing human, sentient, systems that mesh effectively with the new realities and practices will require a more realistic appreciation of human

functioning and of the unconscious, non-rational dimension of economic and organisational life than exists today in the minds of policy-makers (Krantz, 2010: 200, cited in Lees et al., 2013 557).

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