

Multi-Agency Case Audit

6 Step Briefing

Domestic Abuse, Mental Health and Alcohol / Substance Misuse

Theme / Cases

- Themes are based on priorities identified by the NSCB.
- Cases are selected at random by Business intelligence.
- Cases are selected to ensure there is a cross selection of children, their requirements and service intervention.

Process

- Completed chronologies and audit tools submitted for 5 pre-selected cases from each agency.
- Multi-agency meeting to examine and analyse each case.
- Learning Summary developed.
- Actions identified as part of MACA Action Plan.

Strengths identified per case

Case 1

- Very close working relationship between the school and health who knew child well.
- Chair managed the Initial Child Protection Conference very well in wake of Dads initial concerns and reactions.
- Social Worker's direct work with child was excellent with case file providing excellent evidence of child's voice being heard and recorded effectively.

Case 2

- Parents were initially very reluctant to work with Social Care, excellent evidence of challenge to parents by Social Worker.
- The case has been built around the Voice of the Child / Lived Experiences.
- Case has been well managed and stepped down appropriately.
- Health Visitor involvement has been positive with appropriate supervision sought.

Case 3

- Evidence of well written case notes that provide a full picture of the case including good evidence of signs of safety being used.

Case 4

- School engagement with family is positive that children feel supported and clearly have a positive relationship in school.
- Communication between Social Worker and school has been positive including being reactive to any arising issues.

Case 5

- Good communication between Health Visitor and Social Worker.
- Both Health Visitor and Social Worker are persistent in trying to visit the family despite multiple missed calls / failed visits.

Findings identified per case

Case 1

- Better communication of case closure / step down was needed.
- Concerns related to when child visited mum in London and would either come back late, early or not know what happening. Challenging due to different location resolved once SW was able to visit London.
- Dad did not want help with his drug issues which he has self-managed.
- Initial Conference focussed on Dad's drug debt coupled with initial reactions of dad and resistance which resulted in decision of Child Protection Plan rather than Child in Need.

Case 2

- Dad's poor engagement with drug and alcohol services. Aware but did not want to engage.

Case 3

- Concerns that this young person is falling between all services and not receiving the help and support she needs.
- The case is being prevented from moving forward due to the Single Assessment not yet being completed.
- Upon leaving YOS she should have had a full assessment completed, was this shared / requested as it would have provided a full picture of this young person.
- Positive Role Model – It is clear from the case that there is a lack of positive role models within this young person's life which may have caused some of the issues. Need to establish who are the positive influences on her and how these relationships can be enhanced. If these do not exist how can positive relationships be improved and who can provide this?
- Noted that parents have challenged Section 20. They were concerned about the negative connotations this would have for them.
- Noted that there have been no significant incidents since November last year so is the current boyfriend the calming influence although there is no evidence to back this suggestion, historic concerns relate to moving from one boyfriend to another and immediately living with them due to her situation.
- Question regarding homelessness, currently cannot be homeless as at 17 she has chosen where to live but questions remain regarding was she offered accommodation at 16?
- Escalations – Audit clearly shows this is a complex case with many complications factors, challenge given to ensure that supervision is used to discuss cases such as this and if needed case is escalated for support.

Case 4

- No risk assessment currently in place now that the court order against dad has ceased.
- More detail in closure summary to show and identify future risks.
- Mum not attending / not completing the Freedom programme could have been challenged and offered 1-2-1 sessions as an alternative to group work.
- Following case closure it was discovered mum had taken children to visit dad in prison raising the issue of Disguised Compliance and is mum now / still considered to be a protective factor for the children moving forward.
- Further Disguised Compliance suspected between Prison / Probation and Dad including the prison being unaware of potential child safeguarding issues.
- School feel that child is very wary of disclosing issues to school, he will however respond to direct questions evidencing the positive relationship with school.

Findings identified per case continued

Case 5

- Evidence of a parenting assessment being undertaken – if parents are not willing to engage that should inform the assessment.
- Use of the Graded Care Profile as an assessment tool by either Health and/or Social Care.
- More frequent and better co-ordinated joint visits.
- Risk of the children seeing multiple aspects of Domestic Abuse / Violence as mum's relationship with maternal grandmother also contains Domestic Abuse.
- Danger in case suffering from drift and delay.
- Non-compliance / Disguised Compliance evident in case.
- What is mums drive to protect her children, evidence needed of parents capacity to change and effective challenge to parents needed.

Recommendations – Issues Identified Across Multiple Cases

- Non engagement with drug and alcohol support services was evident in multiple cases.
- Disguised Compliance – Although some cases evidenced good challenge to parents others still show a lack of professional curiosity and ability to challenge parent's responses or taking what parents say at face value.
- Escalation of cases – Where cases are complex and needs of children / young people are not being met ensure these are escalated appropriately.
- Future Risk Assessments – How do we record / risk assess for future events such as releases from prison, expiry of court order etc. once a case is closed on various systems to allow for better future planning / MASH being aware of potential safeguarding risks.
- Parenting Assessments – Evidence suggests that parenting assessments are not routinely being undertaken due to non-engagement of parents.
- A good cross section of cases were selected and discussed covering a range of issues and type.
- Attendance at the Multi-Agency Case Meeting was very good with informed, robust discussion including positive representation from schools involved in cases.

Good Practice and Evidence as a Result of this Audit and similar Reviews

- Evidence of some good case work in these audits in particular recording of voice of the child, especially case 2 of a pre-mobile baby.
- Positive work between schools and social care evident in 2 cases.
- Evidence of schools taking on the role and elements of Early Help.