

Multi Agency Case Audit Panel
Theme: Domestic Abuse
Date of Panel: 14/09/16

INTRODUCTION

Working Together 2015 states that LSCB's should "quality assure practice, including through joint audits of case files, involving practitioners and identifying lessons to be learned". In response to this the PSCB have implemented a multi-agency case audit process which aims to provide the PSCB with evidence of safeguarding practice across partner agencies. The theme for the first audit panel was Domestic Abuse, and was identified via the Learning and Professional Practice Sub-Group. 5 children were selected at random from all children currently open to CYPF with a child in need code of domestic abuse at the point of referral.

PROCESS

9 lead auditors were identified from key agencies to facilitate the audit for their agency. These included Children, Young People and Families, Devon and Cornwall Police, Devon and Cornwall Probation, Community Rehabilitation Company, and Learning and Communities, Health and Education. A summary sheet of each audit was requested from all lead auditors. Each case audited had verbal consent from the parent and the parents also participated in a feedback interview. A panel gathered on the 14 September 2016 where 4 of the 5 cases were discussed and learning identified.

IDENTIFIED GOOD PRACTICE

- ✚ Each case evidenced good multi-agency working between CYPF and police.
- ✚ There was effective use of VIST and DASH assessments in all domestic abuse cases.
- ✚ Each case identified a number of comments about good management oversight, from CYPF, police and Probation.
- ✚ There was explicit consideration of victimless prosecution by police in one case.
- ✚ There was good quality work from probation colleagues re assessment and planning.

IDENTIFIED LEARNING

- ✚ In 3 of the 4 cases the child's voice was missing from CYPF, Police and from the 1 probation case. Only 1 case evidenced strongly the voice of the child and it was clear that this did make a difference to the assessment and the family's sense of feeling listened to.

- ✦ Attendance at strategy meetings by police was sporadic in 3 of the 4 cases. There is a sense of confusion between Police and CYPF when requesting information for a strategy discussion and actual attendance at a strategy meeting.
- ✦ Two strategy processes were very good, with informed decision making and good recording. However, two were of poor quality and were used as a gatekeeping process for ICPCs.
- ✦ There appears to be a possible system issue in relation to police linking siblings on their system, resulting in critical information being excluded from some individual children's files.
- ✦ It was recognised that the engagement of perpetrators and fathers in the assessment process was lacking from CYPF, and engagement of the mother was missing from probation. However probation has already made some changes to ensure mothers / partners were included in the future.
- ✦ The quality of planning was varied throughout the audits, with some positive CIN planning but poorer child protection planning.
- ✦ 3 of the 4 cases indicated over optimism and struggled to recognise disguised compliance. There was a sense of waiting for an incident to happen rather than preventing an incident from occurring.

ACTIONS FROM PANEL

- ✦ Police to pick up with Hub and Gateway re confusion over requests for info / strategy discussions. Need to be much clearer about what is being requested from police in relation to attendance at strategy meetings. [MB]
- ✦ Police to review one case decision in light of a later allegation. [MB]
- ✦ Business Manager to follow up with CYPF re the comment that one child may have been physically abused. [MN]
- ✦ Business Manager to ascertain more detail re a possible data breach disclosed by a parent. [MN]
- ✦ Participation Manager to discuss with a parent re giving direct feedback to PSCB. [JM]
- ✦ Chair of Panel to liaise with those agencies that did not complete their audits. [GD]
- ✦ Chair of Panel to write to families involved thanking them for their participation, including a family friendly version of report. [GD and JM]
- ✦ Early Years representative to be identified as a lead auditor for future audits [MN].
- ✦ Depending on the theme for future audits consideration to be given to other lead auditors who may need to be identified. [Business Manager]
- ✦ Clarity needed in relation to who undertakes actual audit for education. [MN]
- ✦ Future auditors should ensure that audits are undertaken with front line staff, rather than a paper audit only [All lead auditors]
- ✦ Judgements will be included in the next round of audits and the process will be amended accordingly. [MN]

Professor Greg Dix – Vice Chair