

LEARNING BRIEF



Sharing Lessons Learned From A Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR), Strengthening Practice Through Experience

THE REVIEW

A Rapid Review was completed in March 2020 in relation to a young infant who suffered serious non-accidental injuries and it was agreed a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review would be commissioned. The impact of Covid-19 meant there were delays in taking this forward. In the interim period further Rapid Reviews identified similar challenges for safeguarding practice and it was agreed to take a thematic approach to this CSPR.

The purpose of this review was to explore local practice in relation to three themes: -

- Effective child protection practice; exploring practitioners' knowledge, understanding and confidence in applying local child protection systems and processes, including reflection on escalation and challenge
- Understanding Families; exploring how the system supports assessment and analysis of early life trauma on parents and parenting capacity and its impact on relationships within the family network, as well as examining how practitioners assess and respond to parental needs (e.g. Learning Difficulties/Disability, Substance Misuse, Mental Health, DAV etc.)
- Understanding the lived experiences of the child; in what ways practitioners can better understand and reflect how children see and understand their world when living in a risky environment

THE LEARNING

When it Works Well

- Provide a strong, coordinated early help response to prevent escalation
- Everyone involved having a shared understanding of the needs and risks for a child and 'singing from the same song sheet'
- Clarity your own and each others' roles and your responsibilities as part of the team supporting the child and their family
- Meeting regularly and having timely outputs from meetings (i.e. minutes, child protection plans etc.); this has helped all practitioners to stay on track and identify any drift or delay
- Virtual meetings had worked well, particularly for S47 strategy discussions as partners who may have struggled to attend are involved from the outset
- Access to safeguarding training to develop knowledge, skills and most importantly confidence

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Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership

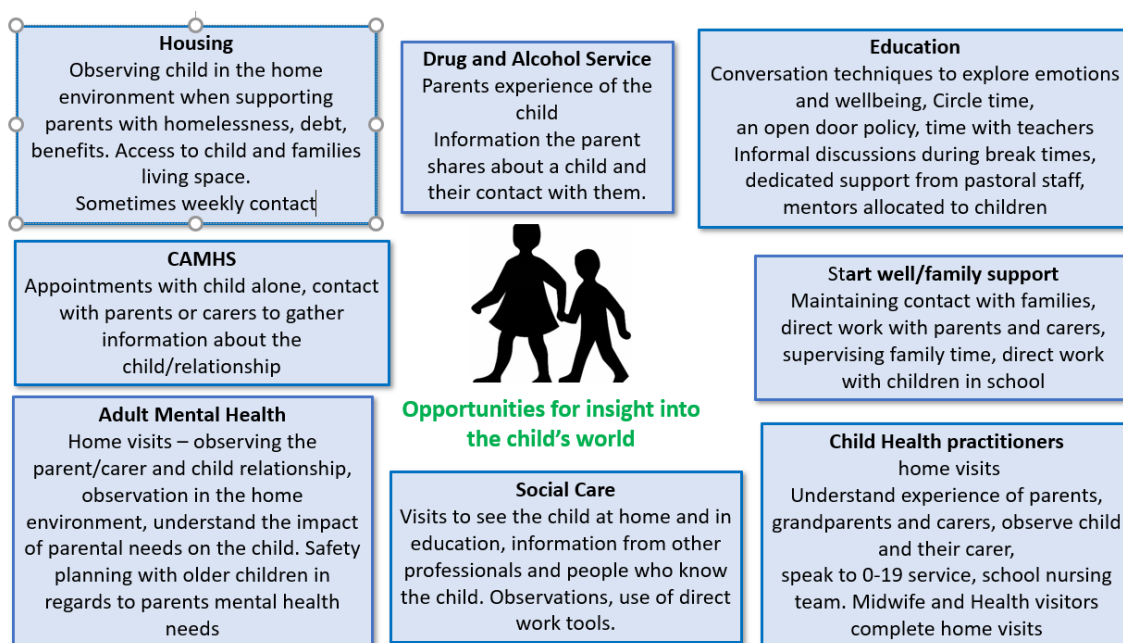
THE LEARNING

When it Works Well

- Being able to easily access support from the 'front door' of Children's Social Care
- Having an existing rapport and relationship with parents and having the skills and confidence to 'hold the difficult conversations'
- Access to good supervision and time to reflect on how interventions are improving outcomes for the child and their family

What Needs to Improve

- Feeling confident to share information earlier with partners; practitioners, managers and organisations need to feel confident they understand information sharing processes to ensure any presenting needs or risks can be responded to at the earliest opportunities.
- Taking opportunities to better understand a parent's life story, their individual needs and how this may impact on parenting; this enables the right 'adult services' to get involved
- Workforce development on issues that adversely impact parental capacity, such as adult mental health, substance misuse, learning difficulty etc.
- Understanding a family's financial situation; as many parents we help and support are struggling with this and it impacts not only providing practicalities such as food, heating, clothing etc. but also creates stress and worry
- Staying connected with other practitioners during Covid restrictions and beyond; having opportunities to meet as a multi-agency group to develop practice and access system expertise
- Agreeing practice standards for child protection to support and promote consistency and confidence across the multi-agency system
- Using the network of practitioners around a child and their more effectively to gain insight into the child's world



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THE RESPONSE

In response to the learning from this review the safeguarding partners have: -

- Established a partnership Information Sharing Project Group to review and further develop local resources to strengthen timely information sharing to safeguard children. This will be rolled out from Autumn 2022 and the impact evaluated in 2023-2024
- Shared the learning with Childrens Services and requested that the learning from the review informs the development of the local practice model, The Bolton Family Framework. The practice model was launched in December 2021 and partners are actively engaged in using the model in child protection processes, including strategy meetings and child protection conferences. the partnership will seek to scrutinise its impact in Autumn 2022.
- Multi-agency Child Protection Standards have been developed in collaboration with stakeholders and will be rolled out in Autumn 2022.
- A 'Child Neglect Resource Pack' has been developed with stakeholders and will be launched in Summer 2022; this provides advice and guidance on assessing and responding to issues likely to affect parenting capacity.
- The partnership have introduced 'Network Bites'; these are monthly sessions where practitioners from across Bolton can attend to find out more about local services and how they support children and their families. These have proved very successful and will continue into 2022-2023.