

Learning from Case Reviews in Southampton 2019

Taking a family approach – particularly where risks from 'Trigger Trio'

- Risk escalates quickly – where there is a combination of **domestic Abuse, mental health issues and / or substance misuse**
- The combination of these issues in Southampton families is seen in a number of serious case reviews
- Higher risk of significant harm posed to others (e.g. family members and children) where a combination of these issues present
- Early identification of issues reduces risks

The importance of using relevant history to inform current practice and recording it! (Chronologies)

- Good quality chronologies that identify risk factors are the basis for good analysis and assessment.
- Ability for multi-agency professionals to consider them at all levels of intervention is important
- Chronologies assist with the identification of patterns of behaviour which can lead to crisis for a family

- Consider case/family history to form a holistic view

The importance of the voice of the adult and child

- See in person the child or adult at risk – in the place or context of exploitation and abuse

- Teenagers should not elicit any less response than a younger child, their voice should be sought
- Consider the daily lived experience of the child or adult at risk i.e. impact of abuse and neglect and the potential long term significant harm.
- Notice other (often non-verbal) ways of picking up child or adults 'voice' – actions, reactions, unsaid responses.

Good communication between agencies and with service users

- Need to establish common goals when decision making and care planning – with the family
- Effective communication and healthy working relationships are important part of good multiagency practice
- Clarity needed – ask!

Escalation

- *'Safeguarding is everyone's business... until the child /individual is safe'*
- A need to constructively challenge if response is inadequate – this is both within own and across agencies
- Use 4LSCB / 4LSAB procedures
- Key factor in promoting the welfare of our children and adults at risk.

Disguised Compliance of parents / carers

- Importance of professional curiosity – suspect something? Triangulate!
- Intentional deception - minimising/denying abuse and neglect.
- Some parents / carers engage well with one set of professionals, for example in education, which can deflect attention from a lack of engagement with other services
- Professionals should not be overly optimistic about progress, delaying timely interventions for families

Impact of Neglect and Self Neglect

- Early intervention is a key factor in reducing harm – long term impact = higher risk of harm
- Trigger trio and neglect issues are interlinked – e.g. DA, substance misuse, mental health and neglect = rise in risk of serious harm

- Housing issues such as rent arrears and anti-social behaviour apparent in many neglect cases
- There is a link between experience of neglect as a child and in adolescence, and then self-neglect as an adult

Under two year olds

- Premature babies may be more vulnerable to abuse and neglect and may present additional challenges for parents/carers to manage
- Professional optimism can lead to risks being underestimated
- Professionals need to engage with all the adults in a baby's life
- Consider the role of fathers
- Think whether the "risks" to the infant are being over shadowed by the parental needs

This sheet provides a summary of learning from case reviews in Southampton up to 2019. It has been produced using information from both Local Safeguarding Adult and Children's Board review and audit activity.

Regular and Effective supervision

- Should be a priority for agencies working with children, families and adults at risk.
- Effective supervision is important to promote good standards of practice and to support individual staff members.
- Positive impact on service users: Research shows that good quality supervision keeps focus on the child. Avoids the drifting of cases and has continuous management oversight, provides the employee with an opportunity to 'debrief'

Safe Sleep

- Risk of overlay increased when a parent sleeps on a sofa, armchair or airbed with a baby

- Increased risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome if parents have been drinking alcohol or taking drugs when bed sharing with a baby

Intra familial Child Sexual Abuse (IFSA)

- Professional awareness of indicators of risk and specialist responses is key
- IFSA not always noticed until disclosed – other presenting factors first (i.e. neglect)
- Some children and young people may try to seek help indirectly

- Risks of co-sleeping are also increased if a baby is premature (born before 37 weeks), or has a low birth weight (less than 2.5kg or 5.5lb)
- Clear messages needed from professionals for families around safe sleep for babies and children

- Children and young people may attempt to seek help in non-verbal ways
- Prior Child Sexual Abuse may be a risk factor for Child Sexual Exploitation.

For more details on all safeguarding and child protection procedures:

- Search '4LSCB Procedures Online' or see 4lscb.proceduresonline.com & click on the Southampton LSCB logo
- Contact LSB team for more information
 - Tel: 023 8083 2955
 - Email: lscb@southampton.gov.uk

For safeguarding adults procedures please search for [4LSAB procedures](#) (or click this link).

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