



Improving Local Practice

Key Messages from the Multi-agency Audit on Child Protection

BSCB carried out an audit to assure itself of the quality of child protection and safeguarding arrangements and processes for children and young people.

Highlights

1. Referrals to social care are timely, appropriate and responded to within timescales. Accurate referrals including as much information as possible support timely and appropriate responses.
2. Child protection plans are good overall, with realistic, manageable goals and effective monitoring arrangements.
3. Good practice was evident in those agencies which linked supervision and case records (BHC & SLHT)
4. Good partnership work is evident in the majority of cases. Where there is frequent and effective communication between agencies in-between meetings, this leads to improved case outcomes.
5. Good use is made of Core Groups, which have clear records and actions.
6. Risk factors such as domestic abuse particularly for the unborn or very young were quickly identified by agencies and addressed in their assessment (CSC, BHC).
7. All Children and Young People's are seen and their views sought by all agencies. The child's need is evident in assessments.
8. Evidence of good practice in communication for an unborn baby, where there was parental mental health concern. SLHT initiated good persistent discharge planning out of hours working with Children's Social Care, Bromley Housing, South London and Maudsley, Oxleas and Police.

Key Actions Taken

9. Records from Child Protection and Child in Need processes and Sexual Exploitation Multi Agency Planning Meetings (MAP) are linked and integrated. Within all relevant agencies MAP minutes joined to files. This is being championed by Conference Chairs and Independent Reviewing Officers.
10. Agencies continue to raise awareness with staff and managers regarding identification and referral pathways for CSE.

Actions to be addressed

11. When professionals find it difficult to engage with a young person or their parent this can lead to case drift. This was evident in the cases of two teenagers within the audit, where difficulties appeared to escalate.
12. Differential needs of the older and young children within a family should be considered. Agencies are raising awareness of this.
13. Where core group meetings are not taking place or where they are being arranged but not attended, Core Group members should report this to Child Protection Chairs.

Further Actions for BSCB

14. A BSCB task group is developing a Child Sexual Exploitation protocol to support agencies working together effectively. It expects to report to the Board in early autumn 2013.
15. BSCB Annual Conference theme in October 2013 is Child Sexual Exploitation.
16. Guidance and procedures for handling professional disputes are available on the BSCB website. Agencies are strongly encouraged to use the formal process.
17. Agencies are reminded that they able to ask the Board's *Quality Assurance & Performance Monitoring Committee* to review a specific case, where interagency practice issues remain unresolved following escalation process.

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