

7 Minute Practice Briefing: Individual Multi-Agency Case Audit February 2023

Learning point 9: The commissioning of an independent assessment by Children’s Social Care had caused more confusion than it had resolved in terms of its conflicting recommendations around the possible risk posed by father.

What is being done to address this?

Following recent Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs) in this area, there has been strengthening in the process around commissioning independent assessments and also around the ability for professionals to be able to challenge their recommendations and outcome.

Learning point 8: Professionals should be reminded of the importance of obtaining the voice of the children and young people and ensuring they are heard directly rather than through their parents/carers.

What is being done to address this?

Dorset Children’s Services to provide assurance via their quality assurance process that they are effectively capturing the voice of the child and that their wishes and feelings are informing their decision making.

Learning point 9: Managers should be reminded of the importance of ensuring robust management oversight is in place and supervision.

What is being done to address this?

Dorset Children’s Services to provide assurance that they have robust management oversight and supervision in place.

Learning point 7: There was an over-reliance from professionals on the children making disclosures themselves about any abuse they were experiencing, and not enough work to consider the wider picture of harm from indicators of CSA.

What is being done by the PDSCP to address this?

The Dorset Multi-Agency Sexual Abuse toolkit focused on the need for practitioners to identify the signs and indicators, rather than relying on children telling them they have been harmed. This includes resources to support practitioners in doing this. The PDSCP sexual abuse training offer has also been revised.

Background

An individual multi-agency case audit was completed in February 2023 in relation to a group of siblings. The learning centers around how multi-agency professionals responded to a group of siblings where there were concerns that they had experienced intra-familial child sexual abuse.

This practice briefing aims to support professionals working with children and families across all statutory and voluntary agencies with the key learning from this multi-agency case audit, as well as identifying what has already been done and the work currently underway by the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children’s Partnership to address this learning.



Learning point 5: The pathway for child protection medical examinations was not clear at that time and not well understood or utilized by professionals. The pathway has since been revised and strengthened and so this process is now much clearer.

What is being done by the PDSCP to address this?

The pathway has already been strengthened but the Partnership is considering whether further reassurance is required around this.

Learning point 6: There was a lack of use of the escalation process from professionals in terms of the referral for a child protection medical.

What is being done by the PDSCP to address this?

The PDSCP are currently reviewing the escalation process and are producing a 7-minute guide on the process for practitioners and managers.

Learning Point 1: Multi-Agency Professionals did not robustly consider the concerns around child sexual abuse, and the focus had been on other complex issues going on in the family.

It was highlighted in this audit that professionals working with this family had missed opportunities to robustly address the concerns being raised around child sexual abuse. There was acknowledgment from the professionals that there had been too much focus on the other complex needs within the family, such as with mum’s mental health issues and the acrimonious relationship between the parents.

What is being done by the PDSCP to address this?

Upskilling of practitioners in relation to working with child sexual abuse has taken place and the Dorset Multi-Agency Sexual Abuse Toolkit is due to launch in September 2023 and a revised training programme is in place.

Learning point 2: Linked to point 1, professionals – in particular education professionals – found it difficult to navigate the parents’ acrimonious relationship.

What is being done by the PDSCP to address this?

The PDSCP are promoting existing training offers and resources for practitioners* to support them in being able to work with parents/carers who have difficult relationships.

Learning point 3: Professionals should be reminded of the importance of good record keeping.

In this case, there had been some issues with Children’s Services not having robust records of all the allegations and concerns being raised in relation to child sexual abuse.

What is being done to address this?

Dorset Children’s Services are to provide assurance, through their own quality assurance processes, to the Partnership that they have robust recording keeping in place.

Learning point 4: The involvement of the LADO should have taken place at an earlier stage given father’s professional role

What is being done by the PDSCP to address this?

A [7 minute briefing on the role of the LADO](#) has been produced which reminds practitioners of the transferable risk criteria of the Management of Allegations process.