

## Domestic Abuse Learning the Lessons Briefing

Dudley Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB) has a duty to evaluate multi-agency working through case file audits which involves professionals from across the children's workforce, and in turn, share the learning regarding the quality of practice and lessons for improvements.

A multi-agency case file audit (MACFA) took place on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2018 which focused on Dudley's approach and response to Domestic Abuse

This briefing paper is to inform how changes can be made to professional practice across the agencies workforce to ensure Dudley's response and support to children and families are effective, robust and consistent.

### Emerging Themes/Risk Factors identified

- ✓ Make better use of risk assessment tools eg DASH
- ✓ Good agency attendance at meetings promotes good information sharing
- ✓ Core groups can obtain updated information from police central referral unit.
- ✓ Plans should be shared with involved agencies
- ✓ Everyone should be aware of consequences and contingencies if plans are not implemented

### Key messages for inter-agency learning

- ✓ **Promote** multi agency information sharing
- ✓ **Evidence** that partner agencies have good understanding of risks DA pose for children
- ✓ **Share** learning from local and national serious case reviews
- ✓ **Promote** training for practitioners to gain an understanding of DA and use of risk assessment tools
- ✓ **Support families** with safe contact arrangements

### Key points for managers

- ✓ **Supervision:** Ensure that staff are receiving quality supervision and cases are reviewed. Staff must also be supported to recognise changes in risk
- ✓ **Reflective Practice and Challenge:** Ensure during supervision that staff and managers are reflecting on specific cases and practice around those and children and families. Be confident to challenge practitioner's opinions and decisions to ensure options are explored and good practice is followed
- ✓ **Voice of the child :** Ensure this continues to be recorded
- ✓ **Multi agency practice:** Ensure staff are maximising the support from other agencies
- ✓ **Good Practice:** Ensure that practitioners are using all available tools and resources and are making use of the training available from DSCB and partners

## Key learning points for Practitioners

- ✓ **Be curious** - Ensure you look 'beyond' first impressions think what a day in the life of the children would feel like.
- ✓ **Understand the signs** –If parents have lots of issues support them in keeping focus on the needs of their children. Parents who have experienced DA may need additional support to make safe decisions for themselves and their children.
- ✓ **Understand the referral process** to the relevant support services available in Dudley, If you make a referral for support or intervention for the family, follow it up and ensure it is taken forward
- ✓ **Hear the voice of the child** – Understand their behaviour and development, observe relationships with others in the home, know who is meeting their needs.
- ✓ **The safety and wellbeing of the child** should always be the priority.
- ✓ **Assessments** – A robust assessment should provide a full picture of a child/young person's developmental need, their lived experience and parent's capacity to meet them.
- ✓ **Plans must focus on the children** – Contribute to joint plans and contingency plans, make sure actions and outcomes are clear and that progress is monitored and sustained.
- ✓ **Share key information** across the relevant agencies and professionals working with the children. Information you may think is irrelevant or not important could form an important part of the bigger picture of that child.
- ✓ **Confidentiality** – Recognise when confidential information needs to be shared with other agencies, when a situation is a safeguarding issue or concern
- ✓ **Seek advice** from designated safeguarding leads and specialist professionals, and share this knowledge with colleagues to support the child and family.

## Reminder to Practitioners

- ✓ **DSCB DA Training**– DSCB offer free face to face training on safeguarding and related themes. These are available via the DSCB website, by clicking on Booking Training:  
<http://safeguarding.dudley.gov.uk/child/work-with-children-young-people/training/>
- ✓ **Multi Agency Domestic Abuse training** Courses running May & June 2018 click link for details  
<http://safeguarding.dudley.gov.uk/child/work-with-children-young-people/training/training-directory/domestic-abuse-and-case-review-training/>
- ✓ **Multi-Agency Safeguarding Procedures** – DSCB operate in partnership with the West Midlands LSCB network for its multi-agency procedures, this cover a wide variety of situations you may encounter. You can access them at: <http://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/>
- ✓ **Use DASH tool** to assess risk  
<http://safelives.org.uk/practice-support/resources-identifying-risk-victims-face>

**For more information about the Dudley Safeguarding Children Board, please visit our website:** <http://safeguarding.dudley.gov.uk/> or send us an email: [DSCB@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:DSCB@dudley.gov.uk)