



## Neglect in Derby – what you need to know

### What we did

The Derby Safeguarding Children Board co-ordinated a multi-agency audit looking in detail at six children and young people who had recently had a child protection plan because of neglect.

We wanted to know how effectively agencies in Derby were working with families and each other to address early concerns about neglect to try and prevent things from getting worse.

### What we found

- ❖ Agencies are working together well at child protection level, liaison between agencies is generally good and the co-ordination and effectiveness of inter-agency work has led to improved planning and focus on individual children's needs.
- ❖ There were examples of:
  - Effective engagement with parents over time that, for example, had led to important disclosures of domestic violence or the development of practical skills that improved children's hygiene and attendance at school.
  - Direct work and good engagement with children leading to improvement in social and interpersonal skills and general happiness evident in school.
  - Multi-agency work through the Core Group having a positive impact on the wellbeing of a child and had prevented the deterioration of the family situation.
- ❖ Where early concerns were emerging there was sometimes a lack of clarity about the role of different agencies to "monitor" and review progress. This together with the lack of clear assessments and plans contributed to drift and extended the time the children experienced neglect.
- ❖ There was an absence of structured assessments at an early stage, used to inform multi-agency work, such as the Early Help Assessment, Graded Care Profile for neglect, Chronologies and Domestic Violence Risk Identification Matrix. This meant that there was limited evidence showing there was effective risk identification and planning on an objective basis.
- ❖ There was little information indicating that cases had been effectively and consistently reviewed by agencies prior to becoming subject of child protection plans.
- ❖ Management oversight is not consistently ensuring that practitioners:
  - Use appropriate assessment tools upon which to base planning and provide a benchmark for review
  - Have the skills, training and support to ensure that complex cases of neglect avoid drift and that appropriate escalation occurs.
- ❖ The difficulties and needs of some parents impacted on their ability to care for their children resulting in neglect. Practice was insufficiently consistent to ensure effective join up between services and a "Think Family" approach ensuring that there is effective coordination between children's and adults' services.



- ❖ Written agreements with parents can be an effective tool however where non-engagement or disguised compliance occurred robust contingency plans were not consistently in place. Where used as part of ongoing monitoring, the use of a written agreement was not always clearly understood by agencies who had an ongoing role with the family.

## **So what's happening now?**

### **What we're doing**

- ❖ The Derby Safeguarding Children Board has implemented a [Neglect Strategy](#) in Derby to ensure effective and consistent action is taken to identify and respond to neglect at an early stage by all agencies.
- ❖ Agencies will be reporting on how they have implemented the strategy and its impact.
- ❖ In particular on how they know management practice is ensuring that key practitioners are:
  - Obtaining the necessary skills and knowledge to work with cases of neglect and with families where there is poor engagement, resistance or disguised compliance;
  - Using assessment tools such as the Early Help Assessment, Graded Care Profile, DVRIM and chronologies to inform planning and decision making in cases of neglect.
- ❖ Further audits will be completed to look at what is happening with children and young people who are receiving early support where there are concerns about neglect.

### **What you can do**

- ❖ Make sure you've discussed your training needs with your manager and are able to complete training on neglect.
- ❖ Incorporate and use the Graded Care Profile and other key assessment tools in your practice.
- ❖ Seek support and supervision with your manager to ensure that you are able to reflect on the children and families you are working with to make sure there are clear assessments, effective plans and that progress is reviewed.
- ❖ Access the [DSCB website](#) and ensure you're familiar with the safeguarding children procedures. The site also has lots of useful information and resources about neglect, domestic abuse, early help and much more.

**Together we can make a difference to address neglect.**