



The ten children chosen for this audit were aged between unborn and 7 years old at the time of the audit.



Multi Agency Quality Assurance Audit: Domestic Abuse Dec 2024

The children have a range of needs and experiences in addition to domestic abuse including parental mental health, parental autism, traveller family, parental substance misuse, parent is a care leaver, neglect



The audit of 10th December 2024 reviewed the records of eight children where there is a Child Protection plan or Child in Need plan under the category of domestic abuse for children under 7 including unborn children. This used the criteria of the current JTAI theme. The aim of the audit was to ascertain whether there were good multi-agency standards for managing cases and whether organisations have implemented a robust and consistent response in line with statutory and good practice guidance, and the Children's Partnership policies and procedures.

What we are worried about?

- Hard to see and hear information about the children because of the complex adult issues
- Being able to see a holistic picture – tendency to focus on one issue and lose sight of other worries
- 'Start again' pattern following a Marac to Marac transfer.
- Lack of clarity about who the men are in families audited, some assumptions about adults involved being 'dad' when they are not
- Child in Need review meeting notes not visible on social care record – unclear if they have taken place, midwifery and DHI not included
- Limited evidence of co-ordinated approach taken at Child in Need level
- Escalation process not used by any agency
- Lack of use of tools by practitioners
- Voice of child missing but older siblings heard, or children as a collective recorded. Each child needs to be heard.

What Good Practice did we see?

- Think family work undertaken by maternity
- Good information sharing, right support at the right time
- Domestic Abuse screening took place throughout pregnancy
- Clear on records about risk of Domestic Abuse
- Use of traveller network to establish trust
- Perpetrators working with Drive
- Regular contact between social care and probation
- Transition between infant and junior school, with good information sharing
- Voice of father clear in some of these audits
- Joint visit with Health visitor and social worker

Eight cases were audited by the multi agency group and six of these were discussed during the audit meeting

Themes for Learning: Start again

- Incident led responses rather than holistic review of chronology and history
- Moving in or out of area and transition is a risk time for starting again
- Pattern of non engagement/avoidant behaviour – parent engages initially and then drops away – review history to make sure patterns are identified and not seen as a one off
- Recognition of cumulative risk and impact of harm is needed
- Recurring pattern of repeat child protection plans and PLO process seen in this audit

Domestic Abuse Training – this is for practitioners from all agencies [Click for more](#)

What is a day in the life of each child like? It is easy to lose sight of this in complex family situations. Each child needs to be heard

Records need to be clear about who is in the room, naming the adults and their relationship to the child

Maintain respectful uncertainty rather than accepting all you are told

Themes for Learning Domestic Abuse alongside other complex issues

What we found: Complex Families

- Parental mental health became focus rather than DA
- Difficult to understand who is the protective parent, who is perpetrator
- Understanding of additional risks due to cultural identity

What needs to Happen?

- Consider use of a multi agency meeting when there are complex family cases
- Ensure all those working with the family are included in multi agency work
- Work alongside the Traveller Liaison Service or other specialist provisions



Organisations that audited their involvement with the ten children were: GPs, Social Care, Sirona, NBT, AWP, Next Link, Police, YJS, EDT and Preventative Services, Education.

For escalation click here

Domestic Abuse Tools are available by clicking here

Traveller Liaison service – more information here