

## Multi Agency Case Audit

### 6 Step Briefing

### Homelessness

#### Theme / Cases

- Themes are based on priorities identified by the NSCB.
- QA Sub Group members nominate cases.
- Cases are selected to ensure there is a cross selection of children, their requirements and service intervention.

#### Process

- Completed chronologies and audit tools submitted for 6 pre-selected cases from each agency.
- Multi agency meeting to examine and analyse each case.
- Learning Summary developed.
- Actions identified as part of MACA Composite Action Plan.

#### Strengths identified per case

##### Case 1

- Lakeside Healthcare went to considerable efforts to gain mother's medical consent.
- Kettering General Hospital appropriately referred this case early.
- As a result of this audit, MASH and NHFT have agreed their own audit action plans.
- Mother's vulnerabilities have been taken into account when sourcing the residential placement to ensure she receives appropriate psychological support when baby is born.

##### Case 2

- Lakeside Healthcare held effective Multi-Disciplinary Meetings to discuss this case.
- There is now a robust clear plan in place and the children are known to be safe with extended family.

##### Case 3

- This young person's voice is clearly recorded by the Social Worker who worked hard to engage the young person and understand their needs.

##### Case 4

- This case is being managed appropriately and all agencies working well together to support the family.
- Voice of the Children are well recorded and the Social Worker is working with both children to understand their views and wishes.
- Good work being undertaken with parents so they understand the seriousness of their situation.
- Children's attendance at school is good.

### Strengths identified per case continued

#### Case 5

- On the day of eviction, Housing were persistent in contacting Safeguarding Children's Services to gain a suitable outcome for the family.

#### Case 6

- Historically, there were elements of good communication between agencies.
- This family are now safe in out of the county accommodation.

### Findings identified per case

#### Case 1

- Evidence of drift and delay and lack of management oversight.
- The need to complete Initial Assessment caused a "rush" to access medical records and difficulties for GP Practice to gain mother's consent.
- Mother agreed to a residential placement, but no contingency plan in place should she change her mind, refuse to go to the placement, or deliver baby out of county. Also, residential placement was not secured.
- Family has been identified as high risk, but there has been no targeted ante-natal Health Visitor input which should have been in place by 30 weeks gestation.
- Father is known to have links with weapons. Weapons were found in his sister's property where the family have been living but the Police have no intelligence on this.
- Father engaged with Social Worker and staff at Kettering General Hospital, but little is known about him.
- Element of disguised compliance as the mother doesn't engage well with all professionals.

#### Case 2

- Significant neglect, extremely poor home conditions and a lack of stability for the children.
- Mother prioritising her own needs before her children.
- Early Help intervention was not put in place early enough.
- Early Help focussed on critical housing issue which meant other concerns were not addressed.
- Children disclosed worries for their younger sibling but voice of the children not responded to.
- Two older children soil and bed wet. Consideration was given to the emotional impact but there was no plan to support them.
- Mother left Northants heavily pregnant and went into labour whilst out of county. Her three children were left in a Bed and Breakfast by themselves and Police returned the children to extended family within Northamptonshire.
- Missed opportunities where legal proceedings should have been instigated.
- Missed health appointments for the children. Non-engagement and disguised compliance not escalated by Health Professionals.
- Chronologies on family history not made available for Case Conference.
- Police had significant concerns regarding mother's choice of males, one being a registered sex offender, but he had left the property before any action was taken by Safeguarding Children's Services.

### **Findings identified per case continued**

#### **Case 4**

- Early Help Assessment for this case due for sign-off due to the critical housing situation.
- Agencies working well to support the family. Mother has significant health needs and both parents have poor resilience and require a lot of support.
- Concern that the parents appear content to allow professionals to do everything for them.
- There is no contingency plan in place should father decide to leave family home (main carer). If this happened, both children would be left in a vulnerable situation as mother's complex health issues would impede her capacity to care for the children physically.

#### **Case 5**

- Housing made 4 referrals to MASH.
- Early Help MASH and Housing did not work well together. Early intervention and communication could have been much improved.
- Early Help MASH dealt with referrals by signposting, but mother says she did not receive any advice.
- A better understanding of the Housing Protocol Safeguarding Children's Services needed.
- Early Help MASH said they struggled to contact mother. Housing had alternate contact details, therefore communication between the partners could have been better.
- NHFT were not aware of this family. However, as this audit was completed, their findings have been very transparent and the case immediately escalated to ensure a plan was put in place for the children.
- Both children have health needs and were attending Northampton General Hospital but the Hospital was not aware of housing concerns.
- On the day of eviction, Housing colleagues attempted to make contact with Safeguarding Children's Services to gain an appropriate resolution for this family.

#### **Case 6**

- The day of eviction proved very difficult for Housing staff as they tried to obtain a resolution from Safeguarding Children's Services.
- A co-ordinated response by Safeguarding Children's Services and Housing would ensure eviction does not reach crisis point and would ensure a contingency plan is in place.
- Child In Need/Core Group meetings should include Housing Officers.
- Housing Officers made a referral to Mental Health for mother, but received no feedback.
- Lack of case supervision and management oversight.

### **Recommendations – Issues Identified Across Multiple Cases**

- Housing and Safeguarding Children's Services need to improve communication and develop closer working relationships.
- Improve knowledge and use of the Northamptonshire 16-17 year old Housing Protocol.
- Disguised compliance by families, particularly mothers, evident in two cases.
- Lack of supervision and management oversight by all agencies.
- Use of chronologies by all agencies would ensure holistic understanding of the child's history.
- Domestic abuse was present in two of the 6 cases reviewed.
- Quality of audits submitted for this review was variable.
- Attendance at today's Multi-Agency Case Meeting was very good with informed, robust discussion.

### **Good Practice and Evidence as a Result of this Audit and similar Reviews**

- 16-17 year old Housing Protocol has been publicised and promoted across Safeguarding Children's Services, along with advice and guidance to support staff.
- Implemented after this Multi Agency Case Audit, cases identified with imminent eviction are flagged to the Early Help Support team by Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and they will make a same day referral to the Northamptonshire County Council Early Help and Prevention Service who will go out to see the family and begin support within 24 hours.