



Integrating Children and
Young People's Services
Building for a brighter future

Derby Safeguarding Children Board

Working with babies and pre-school children: A summary of key learning and good practice

The report *Review of Serious Case Reviews and Learning Reviews 2008 – 2014* sets out the main themes from reviews carried out in Derby between 2008 and the end of 2014.

Below is a *summary version* of the key points for practitioners.

Working with babies and pre-school children

- a) Practitioners concerned that a woman may be concealing a pregnancy should ensure that the Midwifery Service is informed of the concern.
- b) Non mobile babies cannot inflict bruising on themselves and bruising is the result of significant force. Medical attention must be sought.
- c) Be clear between what appears to be a “mark” on the skin and what has been medically determined to be a “bruise”. Seek advice if required.
- d) Make sure information is not misunderstood. Medical terms need to be clearly explained and use plain language that cannot be subject to misinterpretation.
- e) Develop a shared understanding of the information available to you all and what this means, without assuming that other agencies share the same view.
- f) Escalate concerns if it is not possible to actively resolve professional difference of opinion, always put concerns in writing to ensure that they are properly understood. Always follow the DSCB Escalation Policy.
- g) Understand the implications of domestic violence on each member of the family, whatever their age and role in the household.
- h) Use multi-agency meetings to help understand and put in place contingency arrangements when faced with complex or challenging situations.
- i) If a family member openly reports that they feel they might harm a child, make sure that this disclosure and potential risk is taken seriously and a plan is developed.
- j) Professionals need to ask themselves: Who is keeping the child safe? How do we know these measures are adequate? Managers should use these questions in supervision and ensure that an agreed plan is in place to keep the child safe.
- k) Families who have babies with life threatening or complex health problems should be offered a multi-agency Early Help Assessment.

- l) Strategy meetings minutes should be taken by someone who is not chairing the meeting. There is also a risk that repeated use of strategy meetings can delay decision making about risk of harm and future action.
- m) Written records are an essential requirement of good case management in all agencies and must be up to date, factual and contemporaneous.
- n) All men within a family who are responsible for the care of the child must have a parenting capacity assessment and support offered as appropriate.
- o) Little is absolute in child protection work and all professionals should guard against certainty and professional optimism.
- p) Give priority to an assessment being completed during the pregnancy and in good time to ensure that maximum preparation for parenting can be provided. The Multi Agency Protocol for Pre-birth Assessment and Intervention is available on:
<http://www.derbyscb.org.uk/scb10.asp>
- q) Use the Derby Safeguarding Children Board *Thresholds Document* and *Neglect: Graded Care Profile* to help decide how concerns about abuse and neglect are identified, action taken and whether suitable progress is being made.
- r) Attend Derby Safeguarding Children Board multi agency training to support the development of your skills and knowledge in safeguarding.
- s) A Key message for all practitioners in both adult and children services is **Think Family**. Consideration of all family member's strengths, needs and risks helps co-ordinate and focus on problems affecting the whole family and improves outcomes for those families experiencing difficulties.

Key points to remember:

- Be persistent;
- Ask questions – be professionally curious;
- Do not take things on face value and be aware of professional optimism;
- Seek advice and support;
- Share information on a need to know basis;
- Refer to the DSCB Threshold document and DSCB Escalation policy;
- Obtain regular supervision.

*Examples of good practice and the full detail of the key points for working with babies, pre-school and school age children and young people are illustrated in the full report **The Review of Serious Case Reviews and Learning Reviews 2008 – 2014** available on <http://www.derbyscb.org.uk/scb2.asp>*

For further information about the work of the Derby Safeguarding Children Board
Website: www.derbyscb.org.uk Email: dscb@derby.gov.uk

Published 18/06/15