



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

Derby Safeguarding Children Board

Working with school age children and young people: 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 school age children and young people

- a) Early childhood experiences have a critical impact on later development, and need to be thoroughly assessed and understood.
- b) A parent's own history and lifestyle has a significant impact on parenting abilities, and this needs to be assessed and understood.
- c) Use the DSCB CSE Risk Assessment toolkit to understand how serious a situation is and whether safeguarding action is needed.
- d) Young people considered to be at risk of CSE must be treated as having *complex or serious needs or subject of child protection concerns*.
- e) Assessments of the risk of CSE must include consideration of issues of 'capacity' and 'consent', taking account of the grooming process and the impact of coercion.
- f) Criminal behaviour can be another indicator of abuse, and this needs to be taken into account when assessments, plans and sentencing options are being considered.
- g) Covert policing techniques to obtain evidence must be fully understood by all practitioners and managers involved in an operation.
- h) Patience, empathy and perseverance are needed by staff to establish successful engagement with young people.
- i) Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) must consider not just the victim, but all children who possibly remain at risk from the perpetrator in the household or elsewhere.
- j) When returning home after a period in care, build on the knowledge of a child's needs and ensure that their return home is risk assessed and support provided.
- k) Attend Derby Safeguarding Children Board multi agency training to support the development of your skills and knowledge in safeguarding.
- l) Victims of sexual abuse may find it difficult to disclose what has happened. Multi-agency strategy meetings are key to ensuring how best to protect the child.
- m) Effective management oversight and supervision is essential to help staff to "think the unthinkable" before disregarding the suspicion or concern about abuse.

- n) Ensure that families moving across boundaries receive the necessary support from the new area to keep the children safe through effective information sharing and escalation if needed.
- o) Action must be taken if a family is living in conditions that fall short of acceptable living standards for any child, including those who are “Travellers” and / or “Homeless”.
- p) Managers must resolve differences of professional opinion or local arrangements to make sure that children are kept safe during any transition or case transfer.
- q) Practitioners from all agencies must take action to escalate concerns about children and young people who are not in school or college to the local Education Welfare Service.
- r) Use the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Boards’ *Threshold Document* to clarify levels of concern about the welfare of children.
- s) Where there are language barriers exist in working with families, use a professional interpreter service – not family members and particularly not children.
- t) Families are sometimes fearful or anxious about the Police and Social Care. Always help to explain the reason for their involvement and support their role with the family.
- u) Practitioners should retain their professional curiosity and always check out any doubts about the history of a family or facts that appear confusing.
- v) Routinely ask to see proof of identity - identity documents can help at a later date to verify the identity of children and young people who are subject to concern.
- w) Practitioners should take proactive steps to ensure that children are registered with a local GP.
- x) When closing a case where there have been safeguarding concerns always inform other practitioners involved with the family.
- y) Practitioners who work with older children who are risk of abuse should engage with adult services before young people reach 18 to share important safeguarding information. See the Derby Safeguarding Adults Board website – <http://www.derbysab.org.uk/>

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 and obtain regular supervision;
- Share information on a need to know basis;
- Refer to the DSCB Threshold document and DSCB Escalation policy.

*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
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