

# 7 Minute Briefing: Multi Agency Audit: Thresholds and Repeat Referrals (Domestic Abuse and Neglect)

Date: May 2021

## 7. Summary: Key messages to share

- The importance of obtaining consent from those with parental responsibility before a request for support at Level 2/3 is made.
- There is a low percentage of Early Help Assessments being undertaken prior to requests for support being made – this needs to be improved
- There is a need for practitioners to undertake the GCP2 Tool or another associated tool in cases where there are concerns regarding any form of neglectful care.
- Practitioners to be encouraged to escalate their concerns if they disagree with the intervention provided

## 1. Introduction

In Feb 2021, the SSCP Learning from Practice sub-group commissioned a multi-agency audit to enquire into the effectiveness of decision making and threshold application when multiple requests for support had been made for children where there were concerns regarding neglectful care and exposure to domestic abuse. The focus of the audit was children who had been referred two times or more but had not reached threshold for Level 4 intervention. The reporting period agreed was November 2019-November 2020.

## 2. Key Lines of Enquiry

1. Are children who experience concerns by professionals on multiple occasions getting the right level of intervention early enough?
2. Are multi-agency partners completing good quality referrals and are they referencing the threshold document?
3. In response to the referral, is Surrey Children's Services appropriately outlining the threshold decisions for this vulnerable group of children and making clear what support is needed for the child and family?
4. Does the outcome of the multi-agency referral meet the need of the child and family?
5. As a multi-agency group, are we communicating and coordinating an appropriate offer of support to families when it does not meet Level 4 criteria?
6. Are there practice themes (domestic abuse and neglect) associated with decision-making at an early level that contributes to multiple re-referrals?

## 6. Conclusions

- The review found that in the majority of instances threshold within CSPA is being applied correctly.
- The front door is making decisions which support the potential for children to have an offer of support at the right level and in a timely way
- Many children reviewed have experienced multiple referrals due to families not initially taking up the offer of Early Help.



## 3. Findings: Issues 1

Clear barriers to timely intervention were identified:

- No parental consent given (53% of cases)
- In 92% of cases an Early Help Assessment had not been completed prior to the request for support being submitted

Availability of an EHA would provide a much clearer picture of the child, their circumstances, and what has already been in place.

Specific themes identified for this cohort of children/families were; disguised compliance and lack of professional curiosity.

## 5. Findings (Positive)

- The quality of requests for support was good enough to allow for timely decision making, in 95% of cases reviewed.
- Service users reported that helpful support was provided by a range of Family Centres and parents who provided feedback regarding this consistently reported that they were satisfied with the service they received.
- Good practice was noted in CSPA specifically in relation to unborn children referred by Health

## 4. Findings: Issues 2

- There was an absence of specific tools being used such as the Graded Care Profile to support and inform the request for support when concerns were being expressed regarding neglectful care.
- There is a lack of professional curiosity and recognition of cumulative harm within neglectful situations for children, for both the multi-agency referrers and within CSPA.
- Request for support Forms that do not explicitly identify the impact the concerns would have on the child or what the child's lived experience might be can result in the level of support offered being too low