



Domestic Abuse; Are children and families safer following multi-agency intervention? 14 November 2016

About the audit?

As part of the SSCB multiagency audit calendar for 2016-2017 an audit took place on Monday 14 November 2016. The Focus of the audit was on Domestic Abuse;

The sample of cases related to 5 children and young people where there were high risk cases of domestic case and had been through the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) process

The overall goal was to address the following question:

Are children and families safer following multi-agency involvement?

Along with assessing if agencies;

- had the same knowledge of the risks of domestic abuse
- understood the impact of these risks for this child
- had the same view on the strengths for this child
- met the family's cultural needs
- felt things got better or worse for the child following assessment/intervention
- identified if things have been done better by any agency
- highlighted that anything needs to happen right now for this child/family

What did the audit tell us; What went well...

- The audit highlighted that in 4 of the 5 cases agencies were successful in providing effective interventions making the adult victim and children safer following being subject to high level domestic abuse. The 5th case had work still ongoing, so was too early to say they were safer until this work is completed and will be re-visited in 3 months

What did the audit tell us; what needs to improve

- There was little evidence of the child's views being directly captured and quoted on agency audit submissions.
- None of the audit responses sighted the MARAC information/actions or displayed a notification that the family has gone to MARAC. This suggested there is a disconnect of the information being recorded on agency records
- It was evident that the child and family's culture and identity had not been explored or recorded. This means that the 'traditions' and 'family culture' for these children were not understood this was not an issue for a single agency but was prevalent throughout each agencies audit
- There were two cases whereby health practitioners did not discuss with the adult victim how they can better support the victim to protect themselves and their children and in one of the cases a referral to children's services was not made as early as it could have been
- In cases during Q1 of 2016-2017 where a further Domestic Violence incident was reported and that were open to CSC were pre-screened out of MASH Domestic violence screening, the allocated Social Worker had responsibility for notifying all relevant agencies of the incident. During the audit it was evident that these such cases were not always notified to all relevant agencies, so they were unaware that there had been a further Domestic Violence incident reported. However, this has recently been recognised by Senior MASH Managers and improvements to the process have been made. Therefore SSCB require assurance that the changes and improvements made are robust.
- It was felt that the emotional impact of the domestic abuse on the child was not routinely considered by agencies and additional support from a clinical psychologist would have further supported the children in all of the cases
- In two of the cases a referral of perpetrators to a Domestic Violence Perpetrator programme as an action as part of interventions with the family would have been beneficial as there was no evidence this was considered



Audit recommendations

1. Agencies to routinely record information from MARAC on their data systems
2. Practitioners to be advised of the importance that records have direct quotes from the child regarding their wishes and feelings
3. Agencies to ensure plans and records reflect an understanding of culture, diversity and identity for the child and their family
4. Training Programme for Domestic Abuse to raise the importance of discussing with the adult victim how practitioners can better support the victim to protect themselves and their children.
5. The MASH Manager to provide assurance that recent changes and improvements regarding details of cases which are pre-screened out of MASH DV screening are notified to all relevant agencies
6. Referral to DV Perpetrator programme to be routinely considered as an action as part of interventions with the family
7. Schools and School Nurses to consider a referral to clinical psychology as part of the child’s support package for their emotional needs where there are repeat domestic abuse incidents

Following on from the audit recommendations; what can we do now?

