

7 Minute Briefing

Child Practice Review

CPR 2/2018

Changes to Practice

Processing of urgent safeguarding referrals

- VoG Education training Levels 1&2 emphasises importance of keeping a record of any contacts made and to phone referrals through.

- Appropriate processes in place within C&VUHB to ensure immediate/appropriate response in place. Intranet page on accessing the referral form and training packs have been updated advising staff to phone referrals through prior to weekends/bank holidays.

Missed medical appointments for children with previously known concerns

- All Wales approach to 'Was Not Brought' (WNB) appointments in the Health Visiting Service, provides clear guidance that missed appointments by children from families with vulnerabilities must be raised with the UHB Safeguarding Team.

- C&VUHB PARIS system now includes an alert mechanism notifying staff/services who have involvement with the family, of a child's missed medical appointments.

Dental Neglect

- "Lift the Lip" initiative rolled out since July 2018 designed to check for and respond to signs of dental decay.
- C&VUHB safeguarding training levels 1&2 includes significance of dental neglect.

Recommendations continued

- Training/guidance provided in relation to the effective use of the 'All Wales Practice Guide – Safeguarding Children from Neglect'.
- C&VRSB to explore with partner agencies, the possibility of having one shared IT system/platform for safeguarding information.

Recommendations for Improving Systems and Practice

The review made seven recommendations related to the key areas of organisational learning. These are set out as follows:

- The practice and organisational learning to be built into all levels of safeguarding training.
- Training/guidance to staff in relation to processing urgent 'child at risk' safeguarding referrals, to include implications of referrals made prior to weekends/bank holidays and appropriate use of EDT and police.
- Training/guidance to staff in relation to the appropriate use of the neglect tool.
- Training/guidance to staff on what further action should be taken when a child, with previously known concerns, fails to attend medical appointments and is not presented to professionals at prearranged home visits.
- Training/guidance to be provided in relation to the potential broader implications around dental neglect.

Background

A Concise Child Practice Review was commissioned by C&V RSB in accordance with the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 guidance for Multi Agency Child Practice Reviews

The subject of the review was a 4 year old child, with a serious case of neglect resulting in malnutrition, significant advanced dental decay and severe speech delay. The health and medical needs of the child had been neglected, together with his educational needs. The child lived with three elder siblings. There was a history of disguised compliance by parents along with uncooperative behaviour.

This 7-minute briefing will summarise the key learning from this review.

Context

Universal Services were involved with the family and referrals made to specialists in Speech & Language and ENT. Numerous concerns were noted by school in relation to the child. Difficulties were experienced by health professionals in assessing the child, with a pattern of missed medical appointments. Serious concerns raised by school staff as to the health and physical presentation of the child, resulted in a Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) being submitted.

Following the MARF, Police attending at the family home found the conditions to be in an extremely poor state of repair, which was described as in a state of 'general squalor and filth'. The child was then subject of an emergency child protection medical, the results of which confirmed neglect that met the threshold for significant harm.

Context (continued)

Both parents were arrested for criminal child neglect and Child Protection Proceedings were immediately invoked in relation to the child and siblings. The parents were subsequently charged with criminal neglect and pleaded guilty, resulting in a criminal conviction.

Organisational Learning

The following key areas of organisational learning was identified within the review:

- Information sharing and multi-agency working.
- Escalation and follow up of immediate referrals by calling Childrens Services.
- Thorough and accurate record keeping.
- Disguised parental compliance.
- Professional curiosity.
- Implications of severe dental neglect.
- Agency thresholds for safeguarding children referrals
- Voice of the child.

