Practice Matters

Lead Practitioner

What is a Lead Practitioner?

A Lead Practitioner is someone who takes the lead to co-ordinate the whole support provision as agreed in the Child’s Plan for a child and their family where an integrated response is required. The Lead Practitioner is also the one responsible for arranging regular multi-agency meetings to review the Child’s Plan and to keep the plan up to date.

Why have a Lead Practitioner?

To make sure that the Child's Plan is managed properly and to co-ordinate the support described in the Plan. To ensure the team around the child hold each other accountable for their tasks and responsibilities within the Child’s Plan. To be the key person through which all new information and updates comes to; to ensure the whole picture for the child and their family is understood and key information isn’t missed. To be the main link person for the child, their family and professionals working with them.

How to be an effective Lead Practitioner?

* Assessment: to ensure all information held by separate agencies or professionals is brought together and analysed; so a holistic understanding of what life is like for the child is really understood. Over time to ensure any new information or changes in circumstances are incorporated into that assessment together with its impact on the child.
* To be confident and competent at identifying, assessing and managing risk. To act immediately to any risk which places a child at risk of significant harm by developing an Interim Safety Plan and monitoring that plan until the next multi-agency meeting is held.
* To take the lead in formal meetings to ensure all those making decisions about the child have all the appropriate information to make those decisions. To ensure an in-depth understanding of any risks to the child is appropriately understood; together with its impact.
* To remain curious at all times to appreciate there will always be more to understand than is known. To hold multiple hypotheses about problems and their solutions.
* Child’s Plan: To ensure the plan is developed and reviewed regularly. To ensure that the plan is co-developed with the child and their family; their suggested solutions used unless it isn’t safe to do so. To ensure The Child’s Plan is effective in driving the necessary change to achieve the positive outcomes for the child agreed. To act promptly to any drift or delay; keeping the child’s lived experience at the centre of discussions and decisions.
* To communicate well and work collaboratively with the child, family and other involved professions; this includes sharing copies of the plan and any new information promptly which impacts on the assessment or plan with all those involved. To reach a shared understanding of what needs to change and what that change will look like; including its impact on the child.
* To visit the child and their family regularly; to ensure the child’s voice is continuously listened to and acted upon.
* To use supervision well to reflect of the complexities of families, to allow challenge to any stuck views and to allow independent oversight and insight.
* To be able to challenge other professionals or family members if there are concerns around their engagement with or contribution to the plan; to escalate those concerns if necessary in an appropriate and timely manner.