

Welcome to the first Practice and Learning bulletin of 2021.

I am keen to make sure that the bulletin has something of interest for every service so please feel free to make suggestions or send contributions of interest for inclusion.

This month, alongside regular features we will be looking at the role of the Lead Practitioner, Police Powers of Protection, the importance of assessing parent's ability to safely supervise family time and the importance of contacting all family members who could care for a child prior to making any plans of adoption

I have also included information about February's celebration of LGBTQ+ history month; there are lots of events taking place.



**Traci Taylor – Principal Social Worker**



### **Learning from complaints**

We use the outcomes from the complaints we receive to look at our practice and to learn from any mistakes that we have made. It is an important part of quality assuring our work.

The key learning area complaints this month is to ensure that we are keeping in touch with children, young people and families to inform them of what is happening such as when cases are transferring between workers and/or teams; when we are ending our involvement with them.

It is good practice to ensure that we work openly, honestly and in partnership with our children, young people and families; it promotes positive relationships and instils confidence in our service. It is also good practice to record that these conversations have taken place.



## ON PRACTICE

### THE ROLE OF THE LEAD PRACTITIONER

The role of the Lead Practitioner sits within our Early Help offer across the district. Early Help is the term used to describe our response to children, young people and their families as soon as problems emerge at any point in their lives. It is a multi-disciplinary approach that brings a range of agencies together to work in partnership to offer a wide range of skills and expertise that forms a **Team Around the Family (TAF)**.

The **Lead Practitioner** is a named professional from one of our partner agencies who is the family's main point of contact; they will be known to the family already and will be responsible for co-ordinating the early help package of support to ensure that the right help is going in and the right time as good early decision making leads to better outcomes for children, young people and their families.

As part of their role they are responsible for ensuring that each agency involved contributes to the Early Help assessment and the SMART plan of support that results from the assessment; they arrange and chair the initial TAF and ensure that the plan is regularly reviewed and closed where relevant or escalated through the Step up process when the TAF is no longer able to keep children safe or where specialist services are required.

**How is the Lead Practitioner identified?** They are identified from the multi-agency group of practitioners working with the child, young person or family and are chosen through a process of discussion and agreement. The family should be involved in this decision as it is important that they work with someone that they trust.

Lead Practitioners will be offered supervision and line management support from their own agency but will also be supported in their role by other professionals involved with the family. In order to understand their function there is a training package of support and in addition will be supported by Early Help Co-ordinators who sit within Children's Services in our Prevention and Early Help service.

early help

a helping hand for  
the whole family



# Assessing a parent as a protective factor



When we have concerns about a parent (but could also refer to another family member) who has been assessed as a risk to children or who is being assessed it is often practice to ask the other parent (usually the mother but not exclusively) to supervise contact. We should have moved away from using contract of expectations and use safety planning instead. However, prior to this stage we should be carrying out a thorough risk assessment which is evidence based about the individual's ability to safely supervise that contact rather than reliance on the individual saying that "they can manage".

The assessment of risk will focus on the child's safety and bests interests but should also consider any risks to the parent being asked to supervise the contact. For example, children and women (and men) can continue to be abused within a contact arrangement whether they are living together or not. Particular care must be given at points of separation and loss for the perpetrator as the risk may be heightened at this point. Domestic homicide reviews tell us that one of the riskiest times for the person leaving or ending the relationship is at the initial point of separation; it is vital that we take this into consideration in any risk assessment. It is as appropriate to also assess the 'person posing the risk' to inform decisions about contact as it is to assess someone's ability to supervise it.

For children we are already working with contact will be part of the planning process and may be covered in the Child in Need, Child protection, or Child in Care plan.

# POLICE POWERS OF PROTECTION

Our audit activity in November highlighted how that a number of children across the Bradford district are disproportionately being subjected to Police Powers of Protection. As a result of this we are working closely with West Yorkshire Police to understand why this is happening.

Often the Police Powers of Protection are mistakenly referred to or recorded on our case files that this is Police Protection Order (PPO); it is really important that we address our language and refer to it correctly as there is no such thing as a PPO.

## What is Police Protection?

Police Protection is an **emergency power** under Section 46; Children Act 1986 which allows any police officer to protect a child who is reasonably believed to be at risk of significant harm. Section 46 states:

‘where a constable has reasonable cause to believe a child would otherwise be likely to suffer **significant harm** he/she may: -

remove the child to suitable accommodation and keep him/her there; or

take such steps as are reasonable to ensure the child’s removal from any hospital, or other place, in which he/she is then accommodated is prevented.

Where a constable exercised the above power, the child is deemed to be under police protection.

## When should Police Protection be used?

The overriding principle is that wherever possible the decision to remove a child from a parent or carer should be made by a court. Police Protection should, therefore, only be used in **emergency** situations and where it is necessary to ensure the **immediate** safety of the child.

The officer must be satisfied that the criteria of ‘reasonable cause to believe that a child would otherwise suffer significant harm’ has been met.

Where the child or young person is not under a Care Order then consideration should be given to seeking an order via the Courts. If this step is not undertaken the rationale should be recorded on the case file.

There are concerns that Police Protection has been used incorrectly to circumnavigate the judicial procedure. However, where it is clear that a child is not in immediate danger there is an opportunity for social care to seek and order from the court to protect a child.

The question for the police officer who is considering or undecided about whether to invoke Police Powers of Protection is “by **not using the PPP under S46 C.A 1989 would the risk to the child be so great that any delay would put the child at significant risk (or further risk) and, therefore, it would be unthinkable not to put them in Police Protection?**

If PP is used, then it is important to remember that this lasts for up to **72 hours**; this is a temporary, short term measure and allows us to plan the most appropriate course of action for the child.

# AGENCY DECISION MAKING in ADOPTION

## WHAT IS ADM?

This is the term used when the agency makes a decision to present a plan of adoption to the courts. For Bradford our Agency Decision Maker is Richard Fawcett – Assistant Director. Richard is responsible for reviewing all the information presented to him in the form of a Child's Permanence Report (CPR) which gives a very detailed account of the child, their journey including decisions made by the agency about them so far; the family history including the support offered to the parent/s for them to be able to safely care for their baby into adulthood. The CPR should only be presented to the ADM meeting once all possibilities for the baby/child NOT to be adopted have been explored; Social Workers sometimes mistakenly believe that they cannot approach family members or other significant people if parents have not given permission for this. However, adopting a baby or a child out of a family should only be considered when there are no other options available other than adoption. The CPR should contain an explicit narrative of who has been contacted to see if they can care for the baby/child with the reasons this cannot be pursued/considered.

Therefore, it is really important to follow our practice standards around the completion of a good chronology so that we can identify people early on in the process. If the ADM has to defer a decision until that piece of work is undertaken this causes a significant amount of drift and delay in being able to secure an adoptive placement and achieve permanency.

There will be a series of training events about how to write a CPR being offered by One Adoption Yorkshire so for those of you who complete CPRs or are responsible for approving it please look out for these. A suite of documents relating to adoption can be accessed in Tri-x –

## LATEST ADDITIONS TO TRI-X

Tri-x is being updated regularly with new practice guidance and policies. Please have Tri-x open and minimised throughout the day so you can check what the guidance or practice standards say.

Please remember that you can also access the West Yorkshire Safeguarding procedures via the Tri-x link – click into the WYS site; it is set up in a similar way and you can access;

- Policies and procedures
- Resources
- Safeguarding children partnership websites
- Working Together to Safeguard Children

Additionally, you can register for updates so you are alerted when new things are added.

[Tri-x procedures and practice guidance](#)



## CLAIMING OUR PAST – CELEBRATING OUR PRESENT – CREATING OUR FUTURE

LGBTQ+ History Month is an annual month-long observance of LGBTQ+ history, and the history of gay rights and related civil rights movements. It was founded by a Missouri high school teacher, Rodney Wilson. In the United Kingdom this event takes place every February.

LGBTQ+ History month is intended to provide role models, builds the community identity and represents a civil rights statement about the contributions of the LGBTQ+ community; by raising awareness and celebrating the achievements and the diversity of the LGBTQ+ community to combat prejudice.

In the UK the event came in the wake of the abolition in 2003 of Section 28 of the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations.

Bradford Council has put together a series of events (see link below) which starts at 11 am today with a virtual raising of the flag and guest speakers from the LGBTQ+ community as well as representatives from the Council, Bradford 20215, Bradford Cathedral and the NHS.

<https://www.bradford.gov.uk/arts-and-culture/whats-on-in-bradford-district/lgbtqplus-history-month-2021/>

There is also a series of internal events which are included in the calendar but also please see the 3 attached leaflets which give you some detail about events offered in Children's Services Quiz's to promote learning, mindfulness for LGBTQ+ colleagues and Mind Body and Soul which is an event which combines, self – care, resources to support the LGBTQ+ community and spirit which offers a look at the spirit and history of LGBTQ+ including key events and dates including the legislative framework to support and protect the community (although this has not always been the case and this informative session will discuss this).

Below is the new LGBTQ+ flag



**Enjoy the celebrating and learning this month and please share you learning with others.**



All the learning in this bulletin will be followed up by the practice supervisor in your team – it will be on your team meeting agenda to look at what we can do to make sure that the learning in this bulletin is embedded in the work that we do with children and families.

### CONTINUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Have you set up an account for Research in Practice? If not please take the time to do this by clicking this link– <https://www.researchinpractice.org.uk/all/events-training/> - there is an option to set up membership; being a member gives you access to lots of CPD opportunities through Webinars, podcasts for you to watch/listen at your convenience, news and views, topics of interest etc. There is something for everybody no matter what your role. Some of the ones on offer are -

A reminder also that you can access webinars, articles and information from across the region at [www.childrensocialworkmatters.org](http://www.childrensocialworkmatters.org);

CSWM brings all 15 local authorities of Yorkshire and Humber together in one place.



For Feedback or suggestions please contact Traci Taylor, PSW at -

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