

Learning review – Leaving Care Support for Parents

The aim of the learning review was to look at the quality of leaving care support offered to parents, and the risk assessment processes undertaken around the birth of second child with a different parent.

An event for Practitioners was held and was well attended by all agencies involved with the family. The learning event provided an opportunity for senior managers, managers and practitioners who were involved with the family, to examine the case together from a systemic perspective.

The group were asked to consider:

- From a whole system perspective what were the aspects of good practice/ learning points. Did they influence perceptions and response to events?
- Were lived experiences of (the first child) fully understood? And if so, how did it contribute to assessment of risk, planning and decision making?
- What difference did the interventions make to reduce risk or enhance professionals' understanding of what life was like for the family?
- How were decisions and practice managed? What could have helped?

The group then discussed and recorded their analysis, setting out:

- What good would have looked like for the children
- What would good have looked like for the adults
- Good practice/learning for agencies

We discussed what we need to do next,

- As individual practitioners
- As managers
- As organisations
- As multi agency partnerships

Participants were also asked to suggest recommendations and actions to help formulate action plan. **The key messages coming out from the review are:**

The importance of assessments when circumstances change (ie when moving into independent accommodation, or pregnant with second/subsequent child)

Understanding of the role of those working with Care Leavers, and who has oversight when safeguarding concerns are raised around parenting.

Lack of challenge – focus was on parent (as care leaver) not children

Role of fathers – information was not known

The event also highlighted some areas of good practice including:



Good support network for care leaver, trusted relationships with workers



Early Help support



Midwife referring to support services and raising concerns appropriately

By looking through this case, we were able to identify a number of changes that had already been made to some services, which have strengthened processes. This provided reassurance that some of the issues identified in this case, would be dealt with differently now. **This included:**



changes to assessments to include fathers



access to specialist health services



management oversight of safeguarding concerns



Health records now include flag for 'Care Leaver' status (up to 25)

Feedback from the learning event was positive:

open and transparent discussions with no blame

in the true spirit of working together to safeguard children

safe space to share information

Recommendations

1

If Pathway Plan breaks down within first six months – review of Pathway Plan to be chaired by IRO

2

In higher risk cases or where social worker has a positive relationship – continued support and gradual transition to PA

3

Awareness of change in funding from mother and baby placement to Staying Put

4

Staying Put agreement should be incorporated into Pathway Plan

5

Parenting assessment to take into account future changes, including contingencies and have foresight of possible changes re placement moves

6

Information about fathers (and other males) to be included in assessments.

7

Safeguarding referrals regarding the children of care-leavers must be given a response commensurate with the history of the parent and child and be based on a thorough understanding of the child's lived experiences

An action plan based on these recommendations will be developed and overseen by the Learning & Improvement Group (LIG).

The information and learning from this review will also inform the joint review around transitions (from care leavers perspective).