



Practice Guidance for Drug & Alcohol practitioners



Introduction

The Family Safeguarding Model (FSM) recognises the importance of adult workers to work across the service to support bringing about changes to children and families' lives. The overall aim of FSM is to deliver targeted support to families in West Sussex who are identified as needing statutory children's social care interventions, by providing specialist drug and alcohol practitioners as an integral part of the multi-disciplinary Family Safeguarding Teams. One of the principles of the service is the use of 'motivational interviewing' techniques to motivate parents to make and maintain changes and reducing the risk of significant harm to children. Family Safeguarding is strength-based, and a way of working with families so that wherever possible, children can remain in their homes with parents/carers who are provided with tools and strategies to parent safely and avoid needing further intervention from children's services.

Change Grow Live (CGL) is a voluntary organisation specialising in drug and alcohol use in England and Wales. The service offers bespoke and flexible support to people affected by substance use. CGL are working in partnership with West Sussex Children's Services to support the effective delivery of the Family Safeguarding Model.

This guidance is designed to better identify the work required, to promote the effectiveness of the referral system, and to ensure consistency across the service. It will support all professionals in sharing risk and review how families move through the cycle of change. It allows concerns to be addressed holistically within a family unit. This practice guidance will be reviewed, as adjustments will likely be needed as the model develops.

Team structure

The drug and alcohol practitioner team will consist of front-line practitioners, a team leader and admin/data support. A Team leader will be based primarily in Bridge House, Worthing and will work across all three areas. There will be

drug and alcohol practitioners based and co-located in each area working from Central (Bridge House Worthing and County Hall Horsham), West (St James Chichester and Durban House Bognor) and East (Crawley Library Crawley and Sidney West CFC, Burgess Hill).

Type of cases that could be referred

It is known that problematic parental drug and alcohol use can be a factor which significantly impacts the safety and wellbeing of children of all ages (including unborn, who can be especially vulnerable).

Any parent / carer (over the age of 18) who is using drugs and alcohol problematically, and the child is currently being impacted, or may be in the future if nothing changes, can be referred to the drug and alcohol practitioners. The child can either be subject to a Child In Need Plan or Child Protection Plan. Prior to referring, the allocated Social Worker needs to have a conversation with the family about the role of the drug and alcohol practitioner and how their work will support the Child in Need or Child Protection plan.

We know that parents in pre-contemplation may be resistant and/or in denial about the impact of their drug or alcohol use on their child/ren. The Social worker and drug and alcohol practitioners will need to utilise motivational interviewing techniques to promote change and engagement.

It is important that conversations take place with parents and carers about the role and purpose of the drug and alcohol practitioner before referral. They need to understand how they will be involved in the plan and be signed up to working with them. It will be important to present the potential positive impacts of the work, particularly to their children and family life.

The drug and alcohol practitioner will use CGL consent forms as per CGL procedures once introduced to the family.

Referral process

The team leader is set up on West Sussex County Council systems and is contactable via the below CGL email address.

familyteam.wsxdawn@cgl.org.uk

A consultation service is available upon request. If social workers would like to discuss a family to reflect on their approach/work with the family, are unclear whether a parent/carer may be suitable for support from a drug and alcohol practitioner or are struggling with resistance or denial, please arrange a convenient time to speak with the drug and alcohol Team Leader.

If the social worker is clear that a parent/carer will benefit and would like to receive support from a drug and alcohol worker, a **Family Safeguarding Support Request** (actioned from the FS Workbook) should be completed and sent to the virtual referral box on mosaic.

Areas to consider in the referral

- Brief history (how long they have been known to Children's Social Care, previous involvement and what are the main safeguarding issues)?
- Have they been referred to the CGL core service offer? Are they already known/engaging with CGL core service? Did they engage?
- Has agreement for drug and alcohol practitioner intervention been gained by the Social worker following discussion with parent / care?
- Where does the Social worker think the level of harm is to the child due to parents/carer substance use – Red/Amber/Green?

Allocation

New referrals will be considered on a weekly basis and the allocated drug and alcohol practitioner will make contact with the Social worker to make arrangements for an initial joint visit within 3 working days from allocation.

Careful consideration will need to be given in cases with multiple vulnerabilities where adult workers from probation, mental health and domestic abuse service may also be allocated to support the family, to agree who would be best suited to begin work with parent/carer. It is an expectation that the social worker will also discuss this with the family.

Please ensure that invites to group supervision are sent to the allocated drug and alcohol practitioner and the **Workbook Summary – Drug and alcohol practitioner** and the **Workbook Programme – Drug and alcohol practitioner** are opened within 2 working days from allocation to ensure that work can be recorded in a timely manner.

Service Offer

Cases referred to the drug and alcohol practitioners will be triaged using a RAG (Red Amber, Green) rating. This will be based upon severity of substance use and associated risk of harm to the children.

The Parents /carers with drug and/or alcohol use issues will have unique needs, and their pathway through drug and alcohol services will be bespoke in each case. The holistic, joined up approach of the Family Safeguarding team will be informed by co-production of services with each care plan based on a holistic comprehensive assessment of need. This will follow a discussion between the allocated social worker and drug and alcohol practitioner where an initial joint visit can be planned.

The drug and alcohol practitioners will provide a flexible and tailored interventions, based on the individual parent/carer needs which may include:

- Co-ordinated and wrap around support to parents and/or carers
- Direct provision of and/or onward referral to a specialist group work programme
- Supported access to core drug and alcohol treatment services in county (CGL West Sussex DAWN)
- Harm reduction, advice and information including triage assessments, motivational interviewing, and brief interventions
- Overdose prevention, delivery of naloxone programme, injecting equipment exchange and provision of lockable safe storage boxes
- Structured interventions including a range of evidence-based psycho-social interventions, co-ordination and review of people in structured treatment
- Onward referral with consent to the drug and alcohol treatment services for adults with opiate, non-opiate, alcohol, and poly drug use dependencies.

Every session/meeting by the drug and alcohol practitioner will update the risk assessment regarding the parent/carers substance misuse and current goals for recovery.

The drug and alcohol practitioner will provide information to feed into review points i.e Child in Need reviews, core groups and Child Protection conferences. Attendance may not always be possible, but analysis will be available in the Workbook summary.

Parent's/Carer's goals will be identified and progress regularly reviewed, ensuring the engagement with the service is meaningful and treatment exit date will be planned for with the parent/carer.

Drug and alcohol practitioners will use the Workbook summary to record any work undertaken with parents/carers and their progress, by completing a monthly summary in preparation for group supervision.

Drug and alcohol practitioners will also record required information on the CGL case management system as per CGL policy and procedure.

Review / Contacts / References	
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