

01 – Aim of Audit:

Working Together 2018 places a statutory duty on safeguarding partners to evaluate multi agency working through case file audits. The QPP subgroup completes 4 multi agency audits per year to gain understanding and assurance that effective multi agency safeguarding processes are in place. The audit aimed to gain an understanding of how effective core groups are at driving change and progressing CP plans to improve outcomes for children and young people.

02 – Background of Audit:

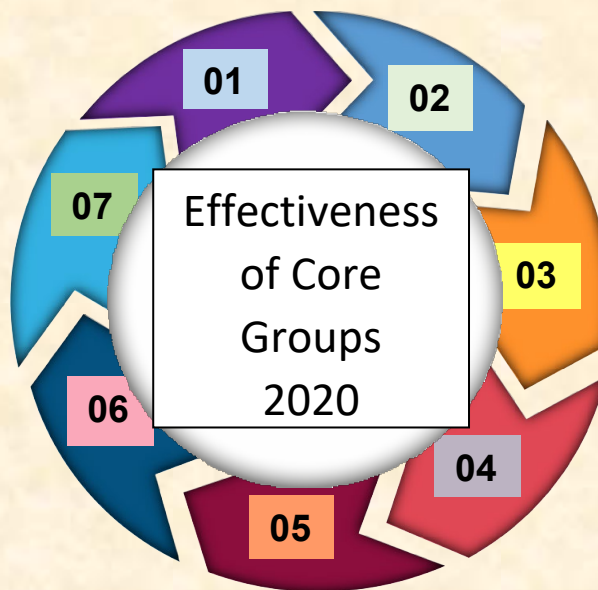
A recent trend in CSPRs (locally and nationally) has identified the negative impact on the effectiveness of CP plans when core groups do not happen in line with statutory guidance. This was also highlighted in the SCSP multi agency audit examining neglect in January 2020, where missed meetings led to missed opportunities to gain a picture of the true lived experience of the children and led to drift and delay. This can lead to little or no positive change for children when there is a lack of accountability for actions for parents and professionals alike.

07 – Recommendations:

The SCSP to ensure that all partner agencies who make up core group membership are fully aware of their role and responsibility as part of the core group in progressing the Child Protection plan. This includes the expectation on them to take joint ownership for the CP plan and that staff are fully supported to fulfil their role – the SCSP training offer will be extended to include this. The SCSP needs to gain assurance that the Resolution and Escalation policy is widely disseminated and the process is correctly understood and used when necessary to escalate cases of concern.

03 – Overview

4 virtual multi agency workshops were held, including 1 at the DSL Forum for Education. Delegates were asked to bring cases of particular concern, or where a child had been subject to a CP plan for 18 months plus. 2 cases were randomly selected for discussion by the Multi Agency Audit Panel who identified good practice and areas for improvement.



04 – Key Learning Themes

Core groups are most successful when all practitioners and the family are fully engaged and view the plan as a shared responsibility
High turnover of social workers noted to have negative impact on plans, and handover between Front Door and Care Management needs to be more robust
 Social workers felt changes need to be made to the LCS core groups form so meeting details can be captured more clearly
Meeting minutes are not shared in a timely manner
 Actions from ICPCs are not always SMART and need to be broken down by the core group to make them manageable for the family
Further guidance on Resolution & Escalation policy required with some attendees unsure on its' use
 Clarity needed on responsibilities within core group on chairing meetings/taking minutes

05 – Areas for improvement

Robust case handover within SCT with minimal impact on family
Standardised meeting structure and use of Signs of Safety
 Clarity of individual and collective roles as part of core group team
Successfully evidencing impact on child, not just following the process. Evidence of change needs to be clear e.g. parent has attended a parenting course, how has this benefitted the child? How has parenting changed?
 Knowledge of Resolution & Escalation Policy – where/what it is and how/when to use it, and also having confidence to have professional discourse over concerns
Solutions focussed approach to identify intended outcome, then how this will be achieved by core group

06 – Good Practice

Health agencies using Health Assessment tools to effectively capture child's voice.
Practitioners very confident in describing what's working well, what needs to improve and next steps.
 All practitioners showed a high commitment to learn from each other, willingness to engage and make changes and to 'get it right' for Sandwell children.
All practitioners had a good knowledge of how to escalate concerns within their own agencies, and some had used the regional escalation protocol successfully
 Attendees felt the core group process was improving, with meetings held within timescale and with a more consistent structure