



city & hackney
safeguarding
children board

CHSCB Case Audits

City of London

2014/15

The CHSCB multi-agency case auditing has identified numerous examples of positive safeguarding practice being undertaken by the partnership. Lessons have also been identified that have led to tangible improvements.

Systematic auditing allows the CHSCB to deliver one of the best learning opportunities for front-line workers; directly engaging them in a process that reflects upon, assesses and measures the quality of professional practice. The CHSCB continues to operate a consistent and regular 6 monthly multi-agency case file audit process, which is carried out across the City of London and Hackney. Two rounds of multi-agency audits were carried out in the City of London during 2014/15 with cases focussing on child protection enquiries and looked after children.

Child Protection Enquiries

Strengths: The following strengths were identified in the cases audited

- Practice was consistent with **London Child Protection Procedures**
- **Information sharing** and investigation planning was strong with robust **contingency plans** in place
- **Interpreters** were used appropriately
- Professionals **worked in partnership** with parents
- The **voice of child was evident** in intervention and recording
- **Robust step down arrangements** were in place to the Early Help Services within the City.

Areas for Action / Impact:

Child Protection Medicals

The audits identified a need to clarify the arrangements for children receiving child protection medical examinations to ensure there was no delay.

The Paediatric Community Team offer all children an assessment within 24 hours of referral or if in an emergency or out of hours, this is undertaken at A&E.

Attendance at Child Protection (CP) Conferences

Non-attendance at CP conferences was identified as an issue in one of the cases audited. This resulted in the Assistant Director for People visiting the one City GP practice to discuss the importance of their engagement through the CP Conference process and a notification being circulated to all City partners.

Make sure you prioritise your attendance at these important meetings

Early identification of vulnerable families

Social Workers, Early Intervention Workers and Children Centre workers engaged in reflective learning sessions to ensure they were alert to indicators of **parental stress and the impact of this on children**. The focus of these sessions was to ensure that professional curiosity was not influenced by parental affluence when considering the neglect of children.

Parental affluence does not make children immune to abuse or neglect. Ensure your focus remains firmly on the child

Looked After Children Audit

Strengths: The following strengths were identified in the cases audited;

- The influence of **dedicated and skilled foster carers** was key in improving outcomes
- **Good placement stability** was a major contributory reason for positive outcomes seen in the cases.
- **Staying Put beyond 18** had also provided consistency and security.
- There had been **few changes of social worker** and this supported positive relationships and good outcomes.
- There has been positive engagement from partners through the formal structures of **LAC reviews and pathway planning**

Areas for Action / Impact:

Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) oversight

The audits identified that some young people had not been seen by their IRO between statutory Looked After Children (LAC) reviews. Performance of the commissioned IRO service was an issue already identified by the City and reinforced through this audit.

For all professionals and volunteers, remember.....children need to be seen, heard and helped

Sharing of intelligence

The CHSCB considered the sharing of intelligence such as CSE problem profiles with Independent Fostering Agencies. It was agreed that the national network of local authority leads is the best mechanism to enable local authorities to determine whether any risks will be present or exacerbated through placing the child / young person in that particular area. Given the sensitive nature of the detail contained within any CSE problem profile, it was not considered possible for the CHSCB to disclose this information in full to IFAs.

When children and young people are being considered for placement in care in other areas, make sure contact is made with local authority lead to ascertain if there are any risks.

Placement Stability

The audits identified that some young people had frequent placement moves. This was reviewed and the moves that occurred in the audited cases were historical.

Co-ordinated planning and high quality support help children stay in placement longer – this is good for their outcomes.

Access to Support

The audits identified evidence that some young people can be adversely affected through delays caused by the immigration process. This was relevant in terms of their emotional and mental health.

Be alert to children's emotional and mental wellbeing and engage CAMHS as necessary for support.