



city & hackney  
safeguarding  
children board

# CHSCB Case Audits

## City of London

### 2015-16: Journey of the Child

***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 operates a consistent and regular 6 monthly multi-agency case file audit process, which is carried out across the City of London and Hackney.

## Case 1

### **Brief summary of case:**

This family was initially known to Early Help Services for additional support relating to the health needs of Child A (age 10). The case was stepped up to statutory intervention following a hospital admission when Child A stopped walking. Professionals were concerned about potential emotional abuse and medical examination led to the view of psychological rather than physical causes.

Mother's disengagement with the CIN plan led to a Section 47 enquiry and at the Initial Child Protection Conference, Child A was believed to have suffered and be at risk of suffering continuing emotional harm due to the acrimonious relationship of the parents, who were in legal proceedings. Mother also instructed her solicitor to challenge professional concerns. At the time of audit, the family had moved to another Local Authority and Child A was still subject to a Child Protection Plan.

### **Strengths:**

- The audit identified evidence of **good communication** between agencies and **long-term engagement** of the family by professionals.
- A specific example of **child-focused practice** was identified when a hospital visit prompted a health professional to identify the need for CAMHS involvement.
- There was evidence of professionals maintaining a **focus on the child** at the Initial Child Protection Conference.
- There was evidence of the use of **escalation** by Children's Service to highlight and resolve non-attendance of an agency at the Initial Child Protection Conference.

### **Key Messages:**

#### **Focus on the Child**

This case highlighted the challenge that professionals face when dealing with litigious families. Professionals can be drawn into spending time and focus on amending reports / documentation and in effect being distracted from the needs of the child.

#### **When working with litigious families reflect on whether you are:**

- **being drawn into alliance with one parent over another?**
- **'paralysed' by parental influence, affluence or legal proceedings?**
- **considering the impact of the parents acrimonious relationship on the child?**

**Seek support in supervision and ensure your focus remains firmly on the child!**

#### **Use of Medical Chronologies**

This case highlighted the responsibility of GPs to coordinate medical chronologies. This is particularly helpful to gain a picture of pattern or issues for children / families who present to various health services.

**GPs – Do you coordinate medical histories to help you identify patterns or issues that require escalation and/or referral to CSC?**

**All professionals - if you have unresolved concerns about the response by health in any case, this can be escalated to the Designated Nurse at City and Hackney CCG.**

## Case 2

### Brief summary of case:

Mother has a family history of sexual and domestic abuse and in recent years has been the victim of several sexual assaults including by the unknown father of Child B.

Child B was the subject of a pre-birth referral by another Local Authority due to mother's additional needs. The case was transferred to City of London and Child B was the subject of a CP plan for neglect.

Before birth, mother was admitted to a Mother and Baby Unit for support with care.

At the time of review, a Public Law Outline process had been initiated and relevant assessments were underway to determine whether care proceedings needed to be initiated.

### Strengths:

- The audits evidenced that professionals balanced the needs of a mother with additional needs without losing focus on the child. **Checks and balances** during the CP conference were evident to ensure that mother's needs were noted but focus stayed on the impact on the baby.
- The audit evidenced the **early identification of risk** from health professionals who appreciated the potential impact of mothers learning difficulties on parenting.
- A **flexible service** was offered to mother by midwives and the **pre-birth and discharge planning** was undertaken in a smooth and child focused way.
- The audit evidenced appropriate **use of the mother and baby unit** which allowed professionals to observe mothers care and interactions with her newly born child.
- There was evidence of the multi-agency partnership **communicating and engaging** in this case, including Housing and Adults Services.

### Key Messages:

#### **Parents with additional needs**

This case highlighted the potential risk of professionals becoming too focused on a parent with additional needs.

**Do you seek specialist advice when working with a parent with additional needs?**

**Are you 'thinking family' and speaking to the right professionals with the right expertise to help?**

**Are you discussing these cases in supervision and reflecting on a 'think family' approach to make sure everyone who needs to be involved is involved?**

## Case 3

### Brief summary of case:

Child C and siblings were known to CIN and Early Help services. However, due to disclosure of domestic abuse by mother, a Section 47 enquiry was initiated. The case went to Initial Child Protection Conference where the children were placed on a Child Protection Plan under the category of Emotional Abuse. During Core Group meetings, it was felt that time was spent focusing on father needs, which distracted the focus on the children and their needs.

After the second review conference, the sibling group were no longer considered to be at risk of significant harm and the family are currently being supported via CIN services.

### Strengths:

- The audit evidenced a **strong relationship** by the family with the Family Support Worker who aided in providing advice, support and easy links into services for the family.
- There was evidence of a **holistic approach** applied when working with this family and **good multi-agency working, information sharing and planning** between professionals.
- Professionals worked in a **prompt and effective** manner to alleviate a wider issue for the family - in this case housing.
- The case evidenced professional's awareness and consideration of a safe place to undertake work with mother on **domestic violence safety planning**.
- The Health Visitor held onto the case until the child was settled at school and transferred to the School Nurse.

### Key Messages:

#### Effective management of meetings

This case proved challenging as professionals felt time was spent during meetings focusing on father needs, which distracted from focus on the children.

**Chairs - Do you plan ahead and consider how you will manage potential disruptions caused by parents or partners?**

**Do you set the tone in the initial meeting and ensure the focus is on the child as well as parental issues?**

**Are you confident in challenging parents and professionals, where focus on the child has drifted?**

#### Empowering victims of Domestic Abuse

This case demonstrated the importance of 'thinking family' and getting the right support for parents.

**Do you consider issues that impact on parental capacity?**

**Are you aware of services available for parents wanting to leave violent relationships?**

#### Voice of the child / young person

This case highlighted the importance of capturing the voice of the child to ensure their views are heard and acted upon.

**As part of your work with families, are you making sure you are talking to children and young people and listening to what they have to say?**

**Social Workers - do you explain to children in an age-appropriate way why you are involved with their family?**