

Wigan Safeguarding Partnership 7 Minute Briefing- Child 3

Background

Child 3 had been known to Children's Social Care since birth. Child 3's mother had also been known to the service from a very young age and had experienced extensive childhood trauma and adversity. A male reported, to be a family friend, remained under investigation for allegations of the abuse of another child. Child 3's mother disclosed that she was pregnant but did not confirm the father until a later date. She experienced miscarriage and her engagement with services was deteriorating, she confirmed being in a relationship with the male she reported to be a family friend and maintained that he did not have contact with child 3. The message changed from no contact, to supervised contact between child 3 and the male, and again, to no contact pending the assessment.

Child 3 was taken to hospital with significant injuries and inconsistent versions of events were recorded. Child 3 sadly passed away a day later.

What was the Learning?

- Lived experience of the child- practitioners should be able to capture the lived experience of a child even when the child is not verbally able to express it.
- Trauma Informed Practice- practitioners should recognise the impact of trauma on the whole family in assessments and consider how this may impact positive outcomes.
- Professional curiosity and application of thresholds- practitioners should be confident in the application and be afforded sufficient managerial oversight.
- Recognising coercion and control- practitioners should be able to recognise the signs and have sufficient resource to support and complete onward referrals.
- Recognising disguised compliance- practitioners should have the confidence to "think the unthinkable" and maintain respectful uncertainty.
- Supervision and oversight- Effective supervision offers a safety net to address gaps, effective managerial oversight may help to prevent professional desensitisation and bring new perspective to current case management.
- Reliance on self-reporting- not having sight of systems or relying on telephone calls/ one persons account to assess, allows gaps in the full picture.
- Agencies should be accountable for their own role in gathering information which affords them an in-depth understanding of the families they are working with, the work being undertaken, why that work is being undertaken and their role within it.
- Action planning- should be robust and measurable, actions set in statutory and multi-agency forums should be checked and followed up for completion and supported by evidence.

Why is this important to Wigan?

The Deal for Children and Young People promotes partnership working, linking in with those services with the most frequent contact with children and families. The approach promotes the early identification of issues, providing timely interventions and integrated care. Our service offer is tailored to the needs of each family. The borough continues to develop service delivery which drives efficient and effective outcomes.

What can we consider?

- Are you able to have conversations which enhance assessments?
- Do you know about families outside of their immediate needs? Is this based on your own conversations?
- Are you aware of the barriers, systems may cause to being professionally curious, do you to ask more questions to fill in potential gaps?
- Do you regularly re-visit on going assessments to amend and adapt based on new knowledge?
- How do you ensure that you keep an open mind in practice, what are you able to do to develop critical analysis and exploration skills to maintain professional curiosity within your role?

What can you do right now?

- Speak openly and honestly with families about your concerns, demonstrate respectful uncertainty and explain your reasoning.
- Practice active listening
- Stay up to date with relevant policies and procedures for your practice
- Be aware of the impact that professional bias, and desensitisation can have on your working relationships and outcomes.
- Actively seek to understand the role of other services working with families and how you can support each other professionally.

Want to learn more?

Information about [professional curiosity and challenge, having difficult conversation and disguised compliance](#)

Information about [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)

Information about [The Impact of Domestic Abuse on Children](#)

Information about [Indicators of Neglect](#)