

Multi-Agency Response to Children who have Repeat Child Protection Plans

September 2022

1 Summary

North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NYSCP) carried out a deep dive multi-agency audit into Multi-Agency Response to Children who have Repeat Child Protection Plans. The audit considered four cases involving children and young people who had Repeat Child Protection Plans.

2 Children and young people who have Repeat Child Protection Plans

Child Protection Plans are made when a child is thought to have suffered significant harm or is likely to suffer significant harm if things don't change. A Child Protection Conference (CPC) is held where there are concerns that a child may not be safe or where their needs are not being met. The CPC decide whether a child needs a Child Protection Plan to address the identified concerns for the child's safety and welfare or whether there is a different way this can be done.

A subsequent Child Protection Conference is held within three months of the first meeting to see if the Child Protection Plan is working to address the concerns around the child.

The Child Protection Plan may be updated in this meeting as risks may have change. The Child Protection Plan will be reviewed within six months and this will continue until there has been enough time for all of the concerns that have been raise to be addressed and to be able to establish if these changes have been embedded.

Following the closure of a CPC, if a new referral is received for the child, a new CPC may take place and if there are any concerns that the child may have suffered significant harm or are likely to suffer significant harm, a Repeat Child Protection Plan may be made.

3 What actions are taken by agencies and professionals?

Repeat Child Protection Plans can raise significant concerns for safeguarding processes depending on the circumstances. When considering a Repeat Child Protection Plan it is important to review:

- The time between the ending of the previous plan and the raising of a subsequent referral
- How long the previous Child Protection Plan was in place
- An evaluation of why the threshold for significant harm has presented itself again
- Whether the risks in the referral were the same or different to the concerns addressed in the previous Child Protection Plan

If the circumstances posing a risk to the child are identical, it could be considered that the previous Child Protection Plan had ended too soon, before improvements to the child's welfare had been fully established.

Repeat Child Protection Plans may be more complicated and if the risks/circumstances are identical to the previous Child Protection Plan, the Repeat Child Protection Plan will need to identify what went wrong with the arrangements that had been put in place what different services, actions and support is available that wasn't offered within the previous plan.

4 What did the audit find – areas working well?

The Multi-Agency Audit Group identified good practice across cases including:

- **Case Recording:** Changes in new module in the Children and Families Service case management system has improved plans and brings together actions like contingency plans, trajectory plans, etc.
- **Home Assessments:** Good practice when using the HEAT Tool that helped practitioners be specific about and identify early signs of neglect as well as what actions to take to address concerns and support the family to improve home conditions and safety.
- **Working together:** Evidence of good, joined up working across several cases examined and joint work, including well attended multi-agency meetings.
- **Working with families:** Evidence of good work from the Children and Families Service who were reported to be supportive and noted good work by the Social Worker in one case.
- **Voice of the child:** Evidence of the voice of the child being taken into account in the assessment and planning
- **Information Sharing:** Evidence that professionals are aware of the need to share information and information sharing was handled well across cases.

5 What did the audit find – areas for development?

The Multi-Agency Audit Group identified areas for development across cases including:

- **Professional Curiosity:** Professionals should be reminded of the need for professional curiosity and ensuring that cases do not become subject to drift.
- **Police Protection Orders:** The Children and Families Service and the North Yorkshire Police should review processes to ensure that where a Police Protection Order is obtained, any safeguarding investigations taking place should be informed of the outcome to ensure that the multi-agency processes are aligned.
- **Changes of Professionals:** It is important to recognise in some cases the changes of professionals, or too many professionals having involvement, may impact on the willingness or capacity of parents to engage.
- **Involvement of Midwives:** Midwives should be involved in cases where there is an unborn baby and pre-birth assessments should inform outcomes. It is important that birth plans are developed in a timely fashion and shared with Maternity Units.
- **Violent Offenders:** Where there are concerns about a person who is a violent offender, risks need to be identified as part of the assessment and planning process. Claire's Law should also be considered.

6 What has NYSCP done with these findings?

NYSCP has considered key learning points from this audit:

- A report with recommendations has been presented to the Learning and Improvement Subgroup (LIS).
- The approved actions have been transcribed to the LIS Action Plan and monitored through the subgroup on a quarterly basis until completed.
- The LIS will use the learning from this audit to identify any further actions required and develop appropriate guidance as required.

7 Next Steps and Resources

- All agencies involved in the audit will feedback specific good practice and areas for development identified for their service during the audit day discussion.
- The NYSCP Learning and Improvement Subgroup will monitor implementation of the actions to review how learning has been translated into practice.

Framework for decision-making: Right help, at the right time by the right person

Worried about a child?

NYSCP Standards and Criteria

NYSCP Procedures for Child Protection Enquiries

NYSCP Procedures for Child Protection Conferences

NYSCP Procedures for Child Protection Plans

Child Protection Conferences:

A Guide for Parents and Carers

NYSCP Guidance on Professional Curiosity