



Multi Agency Briefing Note

Health Involvement in Child Protection Investigation

Evaluation

December 2013

Introduction

North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee wished to better understand the role of health within child protection investigations to identify what was working well and whether any improvements were required. It was agreed that Jillian Russell, Child Protection Lead Officer and Sandra Winton, Child Protection Advisor, would undertake some audit and evaluation activity in relation to the tripartite process and involvement of health services during and following child protection investigations.

The tripartite process is the formal involvement of health in planning child protection investigations. It is a discussion between the social work team manager involved in the investigation, the police officer assigned to the investigation and a member of the Child Protection Health Team.

The discussion considers: action required in response to immediate/imminent risks & needs; what type of medical examination/health assessment is appropriate; whether any further information required; and subsequent planning/progression of the investigation.

What We Did

Jillian Russell and Sandra Winton undertook an audit exercise in relation to children subject to a child protection investigation during one month, with the following key questions:

- 1. Was the tripartite process followed appropriately?***
- 2. Was a child protection medical arranged effectively in situations where one would be expected?***
- 3. Were arrangements made for an assessment of the health needs of all these children?***

We selected all child protection investigations completed in the month of January 2013 and audited the child protection investigation report and the tripartite paperwork. Then we checked health records to evaluate involvement of health services/provision of health assessment following the child protection investigation.

What We Found

1. Sometimes the child protection investigation report states tripartite process took place when it did not.
2. Sometimes there were slight discrepancies between the referral /notification of concern information contained in the child protection investigation report and in the tripartite paperwork.
3. In this audit we found no circumstances where auditors thought a medical should have taken place but it did not.
4. Sometimes medicals take place without going through the tripartite process.
5. Sometimes the tripartite process was begun but not concluded or the paperwork not completed.
6. When health visitors are the named nurse, they are more routinely involved in assessment and planning and health assessments for children are more routinely completed. When school nurses are the named nurse, sometimes they are not involved in assessment and planning and sometimes the health assessment for the child is not completed. This finding holds even in cases where both a health visitor and a school nurse are involved with a family.

What Needs to Improve

These are the agreed areas for improvement. Those responsible for ensuring improvements are implemented will report back to a future meeting of North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee.

1. Need to ensure all social workers understand what the tripartite process is.
Lead - **DAVID MACRITCHIE**, Senior Manager, Social Services
2. Need to ensure information in CP1 and tripartite is carefully matched.
Lead - **DAVID MACRITCHIE**, Senior Manager, Social Services
3. No medical should be organised without proceeding through the tripartite process.
Lead - **NEIL ROBERTSON**, Superintendent, Police Scotland
4. Need to ensure all tripartite's are concluded and paperwork completed.
Lead - **SANDRA WINTON**, Child Protection Advisor, NHS Ayrshire & Arran
5. Need to improve involvement of school nurses in child protection assessment and care planning. Lead - **DONNA MCKEE**, Clinical Nurse Manager, NHS Ayrshire & Arran
6. Need to ensure all children requiring a comprehensive health assessment receive this.
Lead - **DONNA MCKEE**, Clinical Nurse Manager, NHS Ayrshire & Arran