

7 Minute Briefing

1. Reason for Learning Review

Two teenagers each came to harm during placements at a residential unit; sexual exploitation/assault and physical assault. Both were vulnerable, had complex needs and had been admitted after placement breakdowns, until more suitable long-term placements could be found. This proved not to be possible for a considerable number of months. The Learning Review considered:

- Placement finding;
- Risk Assessment and matching for admissions;
- The use of Strategy and Care Planning meetings;
- The approach to considering health and educational needs in assessment and care planning; and transition.

2. Main issues and key learning

- The challenges of finding placements for older vulnerable young people with complex needs, especially if assessments are out of date and placement referrals are not accurate.
- How a very necessary focus on incidents and crises in meetings can undermine pursuit of medium and long terms objectives
- The importance of using 72-hour placement meetings to update risk and matching assessments
- The need for clarity about the status of meetings; in terms of statutory requirements re purpose, who should attend, what should be discussed, and who receives minutes.

3. Main issues & key learning cont

- All health information should be integrated into assessment and care planning including the involvement of GPs especially when they have direct involvement in delivering health care.
- Education Health & Care Plans (EHCPs) should have been in place for both children sooner
- The need for timely transition planning, which is harder to achieve for children who come into care after year 9

4. What worked well

Several practitioners were tenacious in establishing good relationships with the children, including using flexible appointments and some of them had been involved for 2 years plus.

There was evidence of practitioners creating strong multi-agency, multi-disciplinary teams around each child.

The children's views have been sought and taken into account.

5. Recommendations

To use the learning to inform the current review and/or implementation of the following local strategies, policies and procedures: Sufficiency (of placements) strategy; Transition policy: Care Planning meetings guidance; Sexually Harmful Behaviour procedures; and the SEND strategy (regarding supporting children in mainstream schools who do not have EHCPs).

6. Recommendations cont

- Tracking Panel to formally review children who have been waiting a long time for placements.
- Multi-agency audit of the quality of placement referrals.
- Social work assessments of children's needs to be kept up to date.

- To clarify the relationships between: Child and Family Assessments; EHCPs; Health Assessments; Pathway Planning and Transition assessments/planning.
- To routinely inform social workers and Independent Reviewing Officers of existing residents about new admissions.

7. Implementing Change

- Reflect on the learning and discuss the implications for your service/practice.
- Identify and outline the steps you and your team will take to improve practice in line with the findings and recommendations

Additional Information

Visit: <https://safeguardingchildren.salford.gov.uk/>

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