



Gloucestershire
Safeguarding Children
Board

Substance Misuse

Considering the impact of substance misuse on children and young people



Considering Other Issues:

Parental substance misuse is not always the only issue within a household- domestic violence and mental health problems often exist alongside substance misuse. Substance misuse may often be a coping strategy for experiences of domestic abuse.

Risks to children are significantly higher where there is substance misuse and domestic abuse or mental health issues.

Mental health problems are more likely to be exacerbated by substance misuse, either because they are triggered by drug or alcohol consumption or because substances are used in response to a psychiatric problem. Either way mental health problems alongside substance misuse are likely to adversely affect a parent's ability to care for their child.

Meeting the needs of children with substance misusing parents:

It is essential we look through the eyes of the children in families where there is substance misuse to get an understanding of their experience of family life. Where there is need or risk these need to be addressed quickly.

The impact of substance misuse on children can be reduced when information is effectively shared across agencies. Collaboration between professionals is essential in safeguarding children and young people.

Professionals should be aware of the complex issues surrounding a household where substance misuse is present and ensure assessments take everything into account. It should be remembered that treatment of parental substance misuse alone does not necessarily improve a child's experience.

Useful links

<http://www.nspcc.org.uk> - leading UK charity to end child abuse

<http://www.turning-point.co.uk> - A national health and social care provider who tackle substance misuse and mental health issues.

<http://www.nelsontrust.com> - An abstinence based treatment provider based in Gloucestershire.

<http://alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk> - An informal society to tackle alcohol misuse.

Points of contact:

Turning Point: 020 7481 7600
(for help and advice)

Children's helpdesk: 01452 426565
(for professionals and members of public to log concerns about children's welfare)