

What is the GSCB Multi Agency Case Review Panel?

The Multi Agency Case Review Panel was formed in April 2012. It has a unique role in reviewing the effectiveness of partnership working to safeguard children. It is made up of representatives of several organisations who are part of the GSCB. The Panel is part of the partnership approach to making sure that the right children are on the right safeguarding plans for the right length of time.

The Panel convenes once every eight weeks and travels to each of the six Districts to meet with frontline professionals who put forward a case for reflection and discussion. The Panel learns from frontline experience of the safeguarding system in Gloucestershire and then shares the themes with the GSCB.

To date, the Panel have focussed on children subject of a Child Protection Plan for the 2nd time, and children on a plan for 12 months or more. In doing so, it has met with 54 professionals and discussed their experience of working with 42 children.

Who can put a case forward?

Any member of a Child Protection Core Group.

How do I put a case forward?

1. Complete the brief template that can be found on the GSCB website. Send it to the e mail address shown, at least 3 weeks before the Panel meeting.
2. A copy of the form is then sent to members of the Case Review Panel so that they can check their own agency involvement, to inform the discussion.
3. The referrer and other members of the Core Group are invited to attend the Panel, to take part in the discussion of practice issues raised.
4. The themes arising from that Panel meeting will be circulated to all those who attended. The case holder will be responsible for sharing this with the rest of the core group. The themes are also reported to the Social Care Operational Leadership Team via the Service Manager on the panel, and via the Multi-Agency Quality Assurance sub group quarterly report to the GSCB.

What are the benefits of putting a case forward for discussion?

1. **Meet** managers who work closely with the GSCB and share ideas, experiences and solutions
2. **Discuss** and debate the safeguarding issues that preoccupy your working day, to help the GSCB understand your experiences
3. **Hear** directly from the Panel about where your own good practice and challenges are shared or differ from the experience of other professionals across the County
4. **Inspire** others and promote your own successes

Themes arising from cases discussed during the Multi Agency Case Review Panel - Cheltenham 27/09/13



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Understanding Domestic Abuse

- An in depth understanding of the impact of Domestic Abuse is important as it is evident in many cases where the child has been made subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time, due to Domestic Abuse recurring either with an existing or new partner

Healthy Challenge in Core Groups

- When professionals regularly check and question whether the right people are part of the Core Group, this makes sure that practitioners/agencies clearly related to the child's needs and Child Protection Plan are included. For example a DA worker when there has been incidents of domestic abuse or an adult mental health worker when the parents experience mental health issues. Core group meetings held in the family's home can prove beneficial but can make a culture of healthy scepticism and challenge harder.

Continuity of Information Sharing and Planning

- It is essential to make sure that all relevant information is passed on to agencies and professionals who become newly involved with a Child Protection Plan, for example when the family moves locality, so that historical information is taken into account e.g. history of disengagement

Maintaining a child-centred approach

- Core groups need to focus on the child's needs and experience of being subject to a plan so that professionals have an accurate interpretation of the child's views and as a result are able to provide the correct support and services. Mapping 'a day in the life of the child' is useful for best understanding the perspective of the child.

Themes arising from cases discussed during the Multi Agency Case Review Panel - Cheltenham 27/09/13

Understanding the journey from Child Protection Plans to Care Proceedings

- To guard against drift, core group members should seek advice from the lead professionals or discuss a legal planning meeting if they are confused about whether the child protection plan should continue or care proceedings be initiated. Core groups are strengthened where professionals have a common understanding of when legal proceedings need to be considered.

Evaluating Disengagement by parents

- When parents of the child who is subject to a protection plan disengage with professionals and services, it is critical that the child focus is not lost. It is important that professionals consider what the effects and consequences of disengagement by parents mean in terms of the safety and wellbeing of the child. This links back to the core group maintaining a child-centred approach.

Involving both parents/partners

- Professionals should attempt to engage with both the mother of the child, the father, and her partner if different, so that all issues with the family around safety concerns and protective factors can be identified, evaluated and safeguarding plans made accordingly.

Themes arising from cases discussed during the Multi Agency Case Review Panel - Cotswold - 24/06/13



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Understanding Domestic Abuse and Emotional Abuse

- This panel is seeing the impact of Domestic Abuse and resulting Emotional Abuse in many of the more complex cases where practitioners often face the challenge of demonstrating harm 'where you can't see it'
- So the need to create a shared understanding of the effects remains – training is good, but workers need regular updates and opportunities for shared discussion.
- Good practice examples included purposeful Plans with agreed and measurable indicators of change, particularly where thresholds for care proceedings are not met
- A CP Plan for a long time does not in itself protect - need to more confidently manage risk through a robust Child in Need Plan, or evidence the reasons for proceedings

The importance of shared understanding of thresholds for intervention

- Professionals working with the child under the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) do not always feel clear why levels of need have not resulted in a Child Protection Plan or Care Proceedings and they hold a lot of anxiety.
- It is helpful where professionals have visited each others' team meetings to talk about thresholds for intervention and services available.
- Practitioners message to managers - don't issue the policy and guidance about thresholds once, it is helpful if you keep checking whether or not they are being consistently understood and applied across the County.
- Good practice includes Core Groups working together on thorough and timely completion of ground work before care proceedings are initiated.

The importance of Information Sharing

- The point of transfer from one team to another can be a danger point – if there is not enough detailed information sharing and good quality communication, it can create more work to refocus the case (good practice seen) where there has been historical drift.

The Nature of Effective Core Groups

- Top tip: it is helpful where team managers across professional settings attend the first Core Group - it strengthens management oversight, support and keeping the work focussed
- Keep membership small and consistent, meet regularly
- Keep in touch between meetings - little and often
- Question each other, challenging each others' thresholds for intervention where needed
- Set realistic goals for parents (not "end the relationship") and link the goals to measurable change for the child
- Hold a professionals reflective meeting to set a shared approach to challenging parental non engagement, especially where there is a history of this.

Themes arising from cases discussed during the Multi Agency Case Review Panel - Forest of Dean 31/05/13

Understanding Domestic Abuse and Emotional Abuse

- The Panel are seeing where Domestic Abuse and the resulting risk of significant harm due to Emotional Abuse are common issues in complex cases

Evaluating Non engagement by parents

- Concern that problems with parents' engagement over a number of years can lead to poor outcomes for children and no consequences for parents
- Family culture plays a pivotal role in engagement or non-engagement

Diligence in making a request for service

- Professionals are sometimes reluctant to refer to additional services due to past experience and perceptions that children's needs will not meet service thresholds. Safe practice includes not making assumptions about this; checking service criteria or using the protocol for Resolution of Professional Concern.

Confidence to challenge plans

- All professionals within the core group have to be confident enough to own the child protection plan and to challenge each other when needed

Core groups

- Care needs to be taken not to absorb new child protection incidents without taking the opportunity to hold a strategy meeting
- When new strategy discussions are arranged, this allows for further opportunities to share police intelligence, assess whether a criminal offence has been committed and decide what part of the legal framework to work with the child within

Resulting Actions Completed

Issue regarding the culture of reluctance to refer to additional services

- Issue of why practitioners felt reluctant to refer to CYPS was raised during a Commissioning Meeting at the NHS 2Gether Foundation Trust
- It was found that it was a historical issue with practitioners feeling overwhelmed
- Referrals to CYPS however is encouraged and the Gloucester Service Manager has communicated to all Team Managers to do so.

Improving use of Professionals Reflective Meeting

- The Professionals Reflective Meeting Model has been sent to practitioners within the Cotswold Locality in an effort to promote, encourage the use of and improve the effectiveness of the Professionals Reflective Meeting

Planned

Resolution of Professional Concern

- Plans are in place to continue raising awareness of the GSCB protocol for Resolution of Professional concern at the GSCB Safeguarding Children Road Shows in November 2013