

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN – SPOTLIGHT ON HAVING A FAMILY FOCUS

Reasons case reviews were commissioned

- Reviews published between 2013 and 2015 **highlighted lessons for health professionals** to improve their safeguarding practice.
- It was noted that there has been a **reluctance** on the part of health professionals to challenge social workers on the presumption that they know best.
- There is also a tendency to not persist in flagging “niggling concerns” because of the complications of multi-agency working.

•Key Message

- GP Practices who work with different members of the same family need to **share information** with each other on a regular basis. Team meetings are a good way to share information.

Learning for improved practice

- **Find out** each patient’s family details and their links to children. Record these and tell other agencies when this information is relevant to an assessment of need.
- When working with mothers, **make regular enquiries** about male partners.
- Make **routine** enquiries about parents’ drug and alcohol use, and domestic abuse
- **Always** ask patients with mental health difficulties, learning difficulties or drug and alcohol misuse whether they have significant childcare responsibilities.
- **Develop** documentation which prompts an assessment of the social history and background of the child and their family
- When treating a child who may have sustained non-accidental injuries, it is important to **make enquiries** about any other children who may be at risk
- **Implement** a system to alert hospital staff to children on child protection plans.

Demonstrate your competence by:

- Knowing how to share information appropriately, taking into consideration **confidentiality** and data-protection issues.
- Understanding the impact of a family’s cultural and religious background when **assessing risk** to a child or young person, and managing concerns
- Working with other professionals and agencies, with children, young people and their families when there are **safeguarding concerns**.
- Understanding the importance of **children’s rights** in the safeguarding/child protection context, and related legislation.
- **Understanding** information sharing, confidentiality, and consent related to children and young people.
- Understanding the **assessment** of risk and harm.