

## Multi-agency effectiveness learning briefing

Dudley Safeguarding People Partnership (DSPP) has a duty to evaluate multi-agency working through case file audits involving professionals from across the children's workforce, and in turn, share the learning regarding the quality of practice and lessons for improvements.

A Multi-Agency Case File Audit (MACFA) took place in May 2021 which focused on Parental Mental Health

This briefing is to inform how changes can be made to professional practice across the agencies workforce to ensure Dudley's response and support to children and families are effective, robust and consistent.

### **Emerging Themes / Risk Factors identified**

- How agencies and professionals engage and work with fathers continues to be an area of practice that requires improvement
- There is a benefit of adopting 'whole family' approaches to build the resilience of children, young people and their families.

### **Key messages for inter-agency learning**

- Explaining a parent or carer's mental health difficulties can be a platform for wider discussions about relationships and emotions in general.
- Giving children and young people accurate, age appropriate information about mental health problems can address any misconceptions or fears they may have and can give them the language to express themselves
- Inter professional communication and coordination of support and services for families requires improvement

### **Key points for Managers**

- Identifying and engaging whole family networks can benefit both children and adults as this can:
  - reduce feelings of isolation and stigma
  - develop and increase resilience and the family's problem solving skills
  - offer positive ways to interact with each other
  - support more open discussion about mental health across the wider family
  - Ensure that a whole family approach is adopted and that fathers and 'father figures' are connected with, actively engaged and their needs understood.

## Key learning points for Practitioners

- Educating children about parental mental health problems can have several benefits including:
  - increasing the child's resilience
  - challenging the child's misconceptions about mental health
  - increasing the child's understanding and empathy for their parent or carer
  - improving communications between the parent or carer and child
- The development of interventions to support family members to design and implement 'staying well' plans. This could include:
  - sign-posting to other helpful services
  - setting goals
  - offering advice on managing stress
  - recognising the early signs of a relapse

## More Information

### Multi-Agency Safeguarding Procedures

DSPP operates in partnership with other local areas in the West Midlands for its Multi-Agency safeguarding procedures – these cover a wide variety of situations that may be encountered.

Access the procedures at: <http://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/>

For more information on Dudley Safeguarding People Partnership, email us or visit our website below:



[DSPPB@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:DSPPB@dudley.gov.uk)



<http://safeguarding.dudley.gov.uk>

