



Local Learning Review

Practitioner Briefing

Diane – a complex multi-generation case including parental learning disability and neglect

WHO SHOULD READ THE BRIEFING?

Any practitioner and manager whose work brings them into contact with children, young people and adults.

For further information on our safeguarding reviews visit the Dudley safeguarding website.

CASE BACKGROUND

The case was initially considered for a Safeguarding Children's Review following the death of Diane's fourth child at 6 days due to complications of prematurity and intra-uterine growth restriction. Whilst a child had died and there were concerns around the way agencies worked together, it was clear that Diane had ongoing and significant care and support needs which did not appear to have been addressed. The baby had been subject to an Unborn Child Protection Plan under the category of neglect. Two of Diane's babies had died previously and her two children had already been taken into care. A decision was made to conduct a child and adult Partnership Review to identify learning.

OVERVIEW OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

Diane led a very complex and chaotic lifestyle. She demonstrated a number of vulnerabilities including a learning impairment, alcohol misuse, mental health issues and was a known victim of domestic abuse. It was clear from the review that various professionals had difficulty in engaging her and that there was not an individual practitioner who had managed to build up a rapport with her.

There is evidence of start again syndrome particularly in relations to the birth of her children. The parenting assessments undertaken identified inadequacies and yet until she was referred to the Reflect project in 2019, there was no support to assist her to space her pregnancies and offer support to break the cycle of repeated care proceedings.

Although practitioners had recognised that Diane was vulnerable and there was evidence that practitioners identified self-neglect but there did not appear to be a multi-agency safeguarding response or information sharing process to try to support her.

There were clear challenges with Diane moving from area to area which prevented any consistent support and agencies having relevant and updated information about the safeguarding concerns.

There is no evidence of a formalised mental capacity assessment which would perhaps have identified if Diane understood professionals concerns and the impact that her lifestyle had on both herself and her children.

The case highlighted evidence of good practice and thorough assessment processes from some practitioners involved; specifically around building a picture of Diane's lived experience, recognising and acting on indicators of potential undisclosed domestic abuse and the impact of her poor mental health.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. DSPP to consider the feasibility of developing a whole life course neglect/self-neglect strategy
2. Development of a formalised assessment tool to evidence the need for support in cases of suspected self-neglect
3. DSPP consider the development of an intensive support programme for the cohort of young people and adults who present with multiple and complex needs and/or disabilities
4. That the lack of clarity around the difference between learning difficulties and learning disability is shared with practitioners and that any learning need is correctly recorded
5. All practitioners to access Learning Disability Training
6. Maternity Services to consider utilising the Good Practice guidance on working with parents with a Learning Disability
7. The use of the Mental Capacity Act when there is evidence that the person has an impairment which may affect their ability to make decisions and decision specific assessments should be clearly recorded in records

MORE INFORMATION

The DSPP training offer and further information for practitioners relating to learning from reviews is available via the [Learning Zone](#)

Please see the [Self-Neglect](#) page on our website for more information and resources around Adult Self-Neglect

Please see the [Child Neglect](#) page on our website for information, resources and our Child Neglect Strategy