

# What we have learned in 2022/23 – SSCP Multi-Agency Audit Group

## WHAT DO WE WANT TO DO DIFFERENTLY FOR OUR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN SOLIHULL?



### SMART Plans

Our plans need to be multi-agency and drawn up with the family and key professionals involved. Actions need to be clear on what work needs to be done, by whom and when this needs to be completed, as well as considering contingency planning.

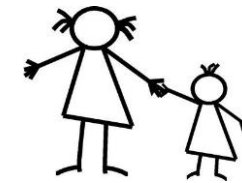


### Individual differences and intersectionality

We need to consider a Child's individual differences (ethnicity, disability etc.) more when understanding their lived experiences.

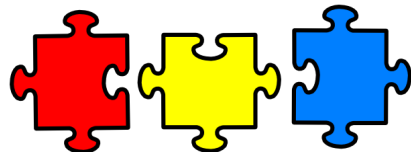
### Consideration of siblings

We are not always considering all children living in the household and any children in contact with the family concerned where risk of harm or actual harm has been identified.



### Strategy meetings

We need to ensure that the standard of strategy meetings is consistent across both those held in the MASH and outside of the MASH particularly in relation to the timeliness and the quality of recording.



### Chronologies (timeline of involvement)

We have found that our timelines of involvement are not routinely kept up to date. Any new information should always be included.



### Sharing of minutes, assessments, and plans

We are seeing consistently throughout our audits that minutes of meetings, assessments and plans are not being shared with all relevant agencies. This needs to improve going forward.

### Assessments

Our multi-agency assessments could be improved by ensuring all relevant agencies are aware of the assessment and their information is used to inform the assessment. We also need to ensure that the outcomes of assessments are shared with all relevant agencies.

# Domestic Abuse

## Background:

In August 2022 a deep dive audit was undertaken to look at the multi-agency response to 7 children for whom there were concerns about domestic abuse using a deep dive method. This included looking at 2 children who were in receipt of early help, 2 children who had Child in Need Plans and 3 children who had Child Protection Plans.

## Good Practice

- There is some evidence that the changes to agency representation in the MASH is supporting the process of completing lateral checks with partner agencies at initial screening and decision making
- Education showed strong practice in escalating concerns as well as sharing information with sibling's schools in relation to Operation Encompass



## The audit findings remind us to:

- Check whether the family is known to MARAC and the outcome of discussions
- Remember that children living with domestic abuse are victims in their own right
- Share specialist risk assessments when making a referral to MASH
- Remember that trauma will impact on the way family members respond
- Consider the extent to which controlling and coercive behaviours are impacting on the family dynamics
- Consider cumulative risks and the coexistence of other issues i.e. substance misuse, mental health, poverty etc.
- Focus on the source of the harm and do not hold the non-abusing parent responsible for managing the behaviours of the abuser
- Think about the 4 practice principles: DA-informed, Trauma-informed, Intersectional and Whole Family

# Strategy Meetings

## Background:

In September 2022 a dip sample was undertaken by the SSCP Audit Group to look at strategy meetings. The sample included four strategy meetings which occurred in the MASH and four strategy meetings for children/young people already open to Children's Services.

## Good Practice

- There was evidence of Police reports being extensive and detailed in aiding in information sharing
- There was evidence of professionals considering family history to inform decision making in some circumstances
- There was evidence of professionals following the pre-birth protocol when convening a strategy meeting
- Good agency representation for strategy meetings in the MASH



## The audit findings remind us to:

- Ensure the standard of strategy meetings are consistent both for open child and those children where meetings were held in the MASH, particularly in relation to timeliness and quality of recording
- Ensure that meeting records are completed in a timely way and shared with partner agencies
- Work in partnership to ensure action plans for open children are SMART
- Think about the individual needs of children and family members in strategy meetings
- Remember to follow procedures on strategy meetings, particularly for strategy meetings which are held outside of the MASH
- Remember to record decision regarding sharing information with family members
- Remember to record which professionals will be seeing the child/children alone, with or without parent consent
- Think about siblings and other children in the household to ensure we are also safeguarding them

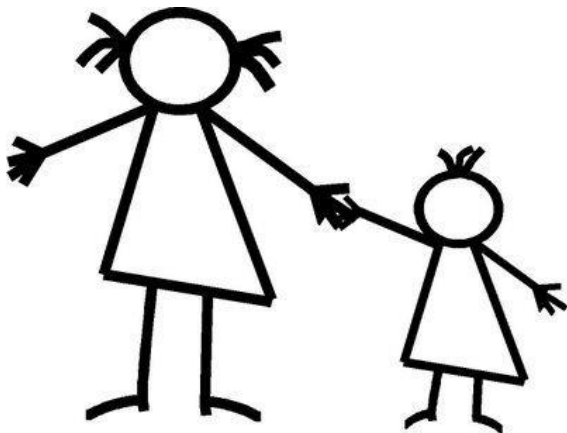
# Physical Abuse

## Background:

In November 2022 a deep dive audit was undertaken to look at the multi-agency response to 7 children for whom there were concerns about physical abuse using a deep dive method. This included looking at 2 children who were in receipt of early help, 2 children who had Child in Need Plans and 3 children who had Child Protection Plans.

## Good Practice

- Evidence of strong practice in including the voice of the child and their emotional wellbeing in some referrals
- The service user feedback obtained from parents/carers was very positive
- University Hospitals Birmingham demonstrated strong practice in exploring what life is like for children.



## Child Protection Medical Assessment Pathway Toolkit for Practitioners



## The audit findings remind us to:

- Ensure practitioners across the multi-agency workforce are familiar with the Birmingham and Solihull Child Protection Medical Assessment Pathway
- Support more effective frontline practice when working with physical abuse concerns by keeping timelines of involvement
- Consider coercion and control of children and young people at risk of or experiencing physical abuse particularly in relation to retracting allegations of historical abuse.
- Think about all children living in the household and any children in contact with the family concerned where risk or experience of physical abuse has been identified.



# Partnership engagement in multi-agency meetings

## Background:

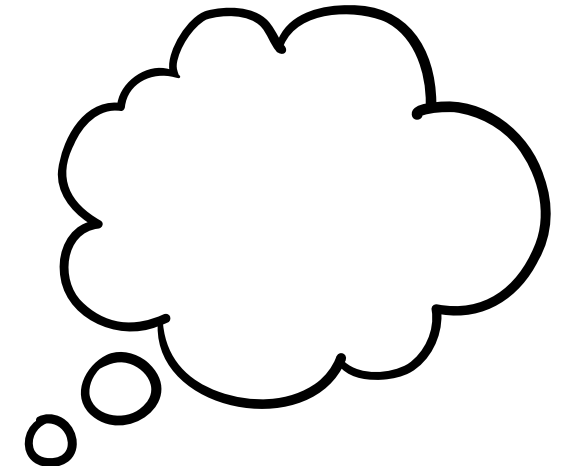
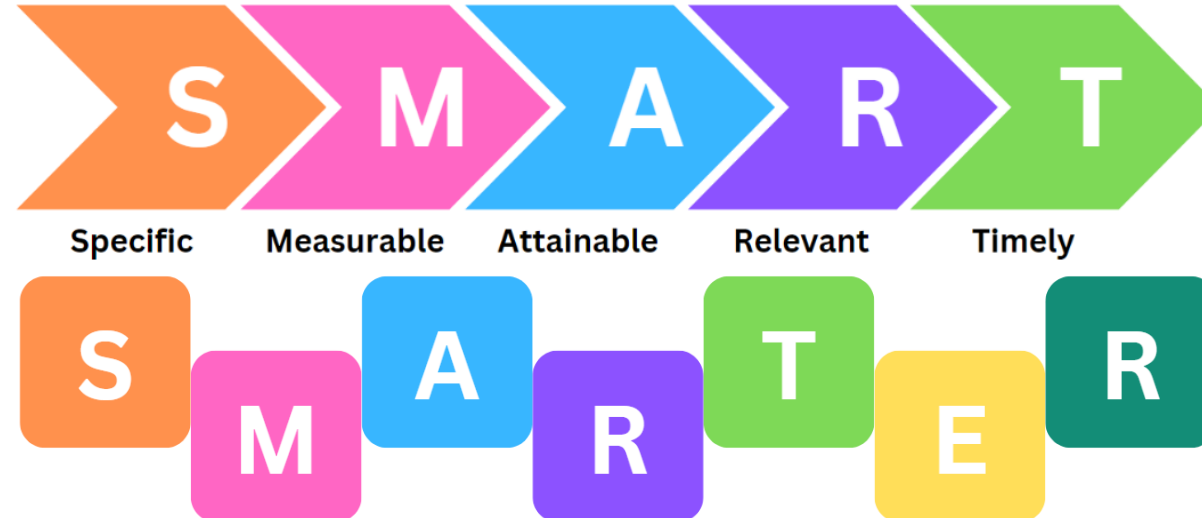
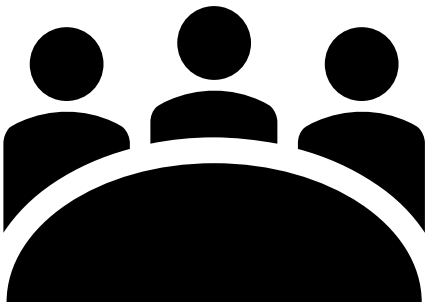
In January 2023 a multi-agency audit was undertaken around partner engagement in a range of meetings relating to children and young people and specifically Child in Need meetings, Child Protection conferences, Core Groups and MAACE meetings. The sample considered 12 children and young people.

## Good Practice

- There was a positive difference in the development of SMART planning since the change in forms for ICPCs
- Parents/carers were invited across a number of meetings and were given the opportunity to contribute throughout
- There was good evidence of agencies submitting reports where required

## The audit findings remind us to:

- Ensure contingency plans are robust
- Ensure action plans are recorded and SMART
- Ensure relevant agencies are always invited to meetings where the child is known to them, particularly with health agencies.
- Remember to record the wishes and feelings of the children and young people involved and ensure that these are up to date



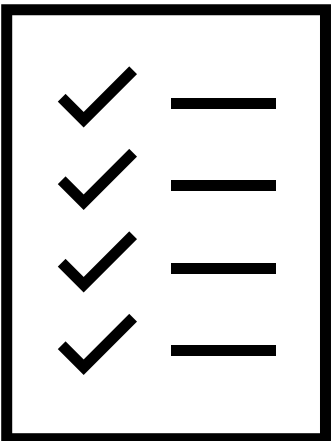
# Sexual Abuse

## Background:

In March 2023 In line with our commitment to multi-agency practice and learning in 2022/23, a multi-agency audit around the theme of sexual abuse was undertaken and involved key partner agencies from across the partnership. The audit group consider 6 children and young people as part of this themed deep dive audit.

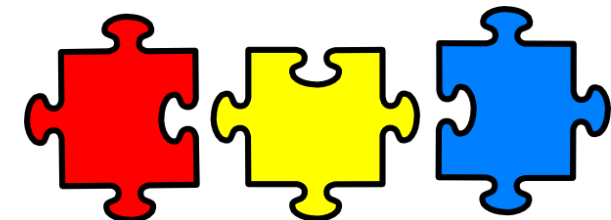
## Good Practice

- All strategy meetings undertaken in the sample were held within timescales
- A SARC doctor was included in strategy meetings where it was deemed necessary
- The voice of the child was evident in 5/6 of the multi-agency assessments.
- Assessments were completed in timescales for 4/6 children audited.
- All reviews took place within timescales.



## The audit findings remind us to:

- Ensure we are 'fact checking' with colleagues and exercising professional curiosity and not just taking what parents say at face value
- Remember that information viewed in silo rarely gives the full picture.
- Consider our agencies accountability in safeguarding children and ensure we are not over reliant on other agencies taking a lead responsibility
- Think about individuals' differences and/or needs (race, ethnicity, disability) when understanding their lived experiences and ensuring that this is considered during the child's journey through the system



# HOW ARE WE RESPONDING TO THE LEARNING FROM OUR MULTI-AGENCY AUDITS?



## Learning briefings, guidance and signposting professionals

- We have produced a [learning briefing](#) from the Domestic Abuse audit signposting professionals to the [SSCP Step Up, Step Down Guidance](#) and [SMART and SMARTER Planning Guidance](#)
- We have developed a good practice guide around [strategy meetings](#)
- We are signposting professionals to [NSPCC resources](#) around considering a Child's individual differences and their intersectionality
- We have promoted the [Birmingham/Solihull Child Protection Medical Assessment Pathway](#) through our website and local procedures
- We are developing guidance around participation at multi-agency meetings
- We are developing multi-agency guidance around timelines of involvement
- We have included learning from our audits in the new [Multi-Agency Guidance for carrying out assessments](#)

## Implementing changes

- Liquid logic will now be able to record the date the decision was made to hold a strategy meeting and when it was actually held to monitor timeliness
- Children's Services and Police are meeting regularly around the timeliness of strategy meetings which occur outside of the MASH
- Core forms are being launched in liquid logic which will aid in capturing invitations, attendance and reports at multi-agency meetings

## Further assurance activity

- We have developed a Domestic Abuse Assurance Tool for the wider partnership in conjunction with SSAB & DAPB
- A further dip sample of strategy meetings is part of the 23/24 SSCP Audit Schedule to measure improvements