

Questions and answers – Contact a Family safeguarding webinar presented by Sue North June 2016

1) Can you give us an example of a service you may have a concern about

During the webinar, I spoke about what to do if you had concerns about a service, and a question was raised asking for an example of this.

For example, you may be doing some work with your parent carers reviewing services, and someone (or maybe more than one) reports an experience that their child had in a leisure / school / short break setting that they were concerned about but had not at the time reported. This could be about staffing levels leaving children unsafe, it could be about the conduct of an individual member of staff or volunteer, it could be about the care and support children and young people receive when in that setting.

As a forum, you need to consider what your responsibility is in relation to this, following the guidelines and your own procedures, as discussed in the webinar.

If you have concern that a child or young person has, or is at risk of suffering from harm, including neglect, you need to take some action.

There are particular things to consider when this relates to a service provision – as the service, or the individual care giver may be working with many children and / or families, so the risk may not only be to the child you are aware of, but to other children and young people in contact with the individual or service.

Sometimes individuals are concerned about raising issues because of the likely impact on them, or their child, or the possibility of the service being stopped or ended. However, if there are any concerns then you need to follow your own procedures and take action. If the concerns are not valid, or can be easily dealt with, then this is likely to happen. However, you may be protecting multiple children and young people by making sure this is reported and investigated.

b) What about adults who don't meet the definition of a vulnerable adult but who may be at risk from violent behaviours of children / young adults with behavioural issues.

We know that for many families who care for children and young people with learning disabilities and / or autism who have behaviours that challenge, that aggressive and sometimes violent behaviours can be part of the challenge that they live with. This can have a profound impact on those caring for these children and young people, and other family members, including siblings, who live in the home.

There are no simple answers about what to do, or how to respond to this, as often those caring for children and young people with behaviour that challenges love and care very deeply for their child,

but face increasing risk themselves, particularly as young people get physically larger. For those with significant communication impairments, it is even more difficult as the behaviour is communicating something that may not be easily understood, and therefore responded to.

We know of many families who are told there is little they can do, other than phone the police, which may inevitably lead to their child or young person's removal, and potential placement in hospital or a forensic setting, which is not what most families want to see happen for their child.

There is a programme of work called Transforming Care, led by NHS England which is about improving the care, support and treatment offered and available to children, young people and adults who have learning disabilities and / or autism and behaviours that challenge and / or mental health conditions. Each local area is part of a Transforming Care Partnership who have a remit to review and improve services for this cohort in their local area.

For parent carer forums, it would be helpful to make sure you have links with your Transforming Care Partnership Board and can contribute or co-produce this activity and work.

There are two particular elements that may be useful for families to know

- a) Each Clinical Commissioning Group is required to have an "at risk of admission register" to help identify children, young people and adults who may be at risk of admission to either a hospital or forensic setting. For children and young people displaying these types of behaviours that challenge, it is very important to ensure that they are known to the CCG and the local partnerships so they can review and ensure that the appropriate help and support is being offered.
- b) For those who are risk of admission, there is a process called a Care and Treatment Review which should be undertaken with the family, young person and all of the service providers to determine if there is an appropriate way to safely care for and support the child or young person in the community rather than in hospital. As part of this review, an Independent clinical expert and an expert by experience also attend to offer some level of scrutiny to the decision making processes. There was information in the last bulletin about how to ask for a CTR if you feel this is necessary.

You can find out more about these things by going to www.england.nhs.uk/ctr

Sample child protection policies:

There are some sample safeguarding and child protection policies on the Contact a Family website – please [see here](#).

However, please review these to see if they are appropriate for your forum – remember each area is different.

You can also find advice and guidance from the NSPCC - Writing a safeguarding policy

www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/safeguarding/writing-a-safeguarding-policy/

If you have concerns about a child or young person and want to speak to someone you can contact the NSPCC helpline:

NSPCC worried about a child: 0808 800 5000

Whistle blowing: 0800 028 0285

Female genital mutilation (FGM) helpline: 0800 028 3550

Modern slavery helpline: 0800 0121 700

Gangs helpline: 0808 800 5000

Or email help@nspcc.org.uk