

Multi-Agency Learning Review Child Sexual Abuse

FOCUS

The MALR looked at a case of child on child sexual abuse between two siblings. The purpose was to understand the context, the issues and the learning points.

BACKGROUND

The family had issues with neglect and had been involved with a variety of services. The family had frequent moves between Local Authorities. Dad did not engage very much with services; Mum engaged but would often avoid and deflect interventions. Following the alleged incident, Mum took the children to the police station; charges were made but subsequently dropped due to a lack of evidence.

DISCUSSION

The discussion involved professionals from the agencies that had worked with both children. The discussion centred on the family history and the information that was known to agencies, the circumstances around the incident itself and, crucially, the aftermath for both children, and how they were supported.

LEARNING POINTS

1. Consider the most appropriate tools to use when working with a family, based on their needs and the issues they are experiencing.
2. Early consideration should be given to appointing a second social worker when abuse is between siblings to ensure both young people have an advocate.
3. Where a newly qualified member of staff is involved in a complex case, due consideration should be given as to who should be assigned as primary and secondary social worker, based on experience and professional confidence.
4. Good practice is enhanced by reflective multi-agency case discussion; routine inter-agency discussion about complex cases is productive in identifying the best way to work with the child and family and to overcome any blockages. These multi-agency discussions should be encouraged.
5. Consideration should be given to shared recording across agencies where a child is on a Child Protection plan.
6. Managers should give consideration as to which key training courses meet the requirements of their teams.