## A thematic review examining the quality of child protection investigations in Bristol

Commissioned by **KBSP** Contributors: the local authority (Bristol & South Gloucestershire), Avon & Somerset police, probation and health services Key themes 1. Planning the investigation well at the beginning - outcomes are improved and engagement with children is strong.

- 2. Our workforce would benefit from more specialist training together about how to do s47 investigations.
  - 3. Systemic tools would strengthen the quality of planning e.g. genograms and chronologies.
- 000

statistics

Key

Increased number of Strategy discussions from 903 in 2019, to 1623 in 2022

38% increase in investigative demands for Avon

- & Somerset Police 'Operation Ruby'
- 28% increase in child protection medical
- examinations

here was a clear desire and commitment to strengthen arrangements where-ever possible.

# Learning identified:

### What you need to know as a manager chairing Strategy meetings

- If a s47 investigation is required, the strategy is an opportunity & to agree with partners about how you will gather the evidence to assess the significant harm you suspect a child is experiencing. This should be at the centre of plans.
- 'Think Family' invite schools who work with siblings or specialist agencies to the Strategy meeting e.g., IDVAs, to support safety planning.
- Improvements should include more joint visiting and collaborative work between agencies - if you are being asked to lead as a single agency, is this most appropriate to the situation?
- o Bristol's standard agenda and template should be used for Strategy discussions.
- Use genograms and structured decision-making tools to support you in structuring your meetings.
- Make sure plans are specific to the developmental age and needs of each child in the family.
- Minutes should have clarity about roles, responsibilities, timings and agreed mechanisms for feedback to relevant partners, for both immediate safety and medium-term investigation, through clear, next steps.

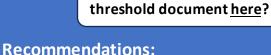
#### What you need to know as a Child Protection practitioner:

- Ask yourself whether the approach you are taking is effective at helping you understand the type and degree of harm a child is experiencing.
- o Plan your communication and observation approach before you go out to see a child or parents.
- Significant changes in safety plans should be clearly communicated between professionals.
- Developing a joint timeline of events, highlighting areas where information is unclear or outstanding, can support you to focus your enquiries.
- You should observe ABEs of children allocated to you so you can hear their evidence and suggest questions or approaches.

### Independent Reviewer: Kevin Ball

8

- Review and embed threshold guidance to reflect a continuum of need, to support professionals' understanding of the different levels of
- intervention. NB: this has been completed. \* Police and BCC Senior Leaders to consider colocation of the joint child protection teams.
- Improve multi-agency information and data to support regular reviews of the quality and standard of child protection investigations.
- KBSP to develop a workforce training strategy for professionals involved in child protection work. BCC to develop new booking systems for multiagency Strategy discussions.
  - BCC to compile a selection of analysis tools to support practitioners and managers achieve stronger analysis, for use from the point of Strategy discussions onwards; ensure use of genograms as a minimum standard.
  - BCC to devise a standard agenda and template to steer Strategy discussions.
  - KBSP to develop and disseminate a resource, which easily represents and explains the different agency roles, responsibilities & expectations.
- KBSP to explore development of a sustainable model of multi-agency group supervision to support stronger working relationships.



\* Have you read the new



Multi-

agency

scrutiny

panels

IT s ys tems -

bookings

-Ò

-Ò



Understanding continuum of need Workingarrangements Training staff & workforce capacity Quality information & timely sharing