

Priority Three First 1001 Days

What do we know about children who are taken into Police Protection within their first 1001 days, who are not known to safeguarding services ahead of this intervention?

Overview

This learning briefing has been developed following the DSCP completing work under Priority Three, first 1001 days which forms part of the DSCP Priority Plan 2023-2026. This briefing highlights the key learning, shares strengths in practice and identifies areas for learning in safeguarding practice, together with details on the steps you can take to find out more and access further training and resources.

Definition: First 1001 days looks at the life of a child from conception to 2 years old.

Methodology: Multi agency audit, a practitioner led multi-agency audit was arranged by the DSCP Business Team.

Scope:

- There were 34 children identified who were removed from parent's care when they were unknown to CYPS (17 families) between September – December 2023.
- 8 of these 34 children were within the first 1001-day age bracket. The other children were all older than 1001 days, however some within the 34 cases had a sibling link to the 8 children identified.
- Sibling links were considered, however only briefly discussed for learning purposes (3 children had sibling groups)
- The children identified were children removed from parent's care by Police Protection (PP) or PP was considered but Section 20 was given by the parents.

Definition of unknown: These children were not open to Children's Social Care at the time of removal, but some of the children were known historically and/or have siblings who have records on Children Social Care records.

Strengths

1. **Consistency** seen in practitioners working with families, therefore positive relationships developed.
2. Good **multi agency response** to children when identified to be at risk. Partner agencies speaking to one another and making enquiries after safeguarding identified.
3. Evidence of **safeguarding supervision** taking place and being recorded on the child's files.
4. The use of the **non-mobile baby protocol** was initiated and used for three of the children where physical injuries were seen.

Strengths

5. There is good evidence of working in partnership with parents, especially mothers. **Efforts were made to engage fathers.** This was a key finding by HDFT.
6. There was evidence of partners going out of their way to **visit and support parents, children, families** by the universal team around them when there were known vulnerabilities.

Resources: [Learning from Practice \(Fathers, Male Carers\) \(durham-scp.org.uk\)](#)

Voice of the family

“Communicate a little bit more, she was fine and healthy, but I felt I needed to chase people to visit me from services” (Mother)

“Health visitor referred me to services. She did ask questions. They did it appropriately” (Father)

“All parents are different and do things differently - all children are different. Please remember everyone is trying their best” (Mother)

Resource: [County Durham's Early Help Strategy 2024 - 2026](#)

Next Steps/Tools

Briefings have been developed by the DSCP and training offered on the DSCP website.

- Safe Sleeping and Safe Handling
- Enhanced Parent Support Program
- Concealed Pregnancies
- Professional Curiosity and cross Boundary Information Sharing.

<https://durham-scp.org.uk/training-information/other-e-learning-courses/Clarify, Verify and Reflect Professional Curiosity>

Learning

1. **Professional Curiosity:** At times information was being taken at face value; practitioners were not curious when information was shared with them, or verifying information shared. Professional optimism.
1. **Importance of information gathering:** Children were seen in isolation by practitioner working with individual children rather than looking at the whole family. There was Limited evidence of multi-agency working and communication when children are open to universal services only.
2. **Professional challenge:** Limited challenge seen between professionals. The IDG asked whether the question "what if they are wrong? ", is asked enough and do partners know they can challenge professional decision making.
3. **Cross boundary working and information sharing:** limited challenge to other LA's when children and families are being moved into the Durham area and information about these families is not shared.

Learning

5. **Children need to receive the right help, at the right time by appropriately skilled practitioner.**
 - Identify the right practitioners to coordinate support to families when they are not open to CYPS or when children are closing to CYPS.
 - Closure/Step down meetings are key. Make sure that when children close to statutory services, universal services have a clear plan, including contingency plan and bottom lines so that they feel confident to refer back in when necessary.
 - Multiple pregnancies, the risk of concealed pregnancies, and what support should be offered to parents following the birth of children.
 - Engaging with the right services and identifying the appropriate support.

Resources:

Information Sharing to Safeguard Children - How we work in Durham [training-information/other-e-learning-courses/](#)

Priority
Work