



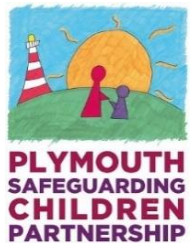
**PLYMOUTH
SAFEGUARDING
CHILDREN
PARTNERSHIP**

Rapid Review Learning Briefing



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In February 2025 Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership concluded its Rapid Review in relation to the death of a baby and where domestic abuse was a feature within the family



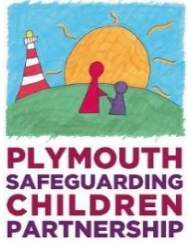
What is a Rapid Review?

- When a serious incident happens to a child the local area makes a notification to the national Child Safeguarding Panel
- Safeguarding Children Partnership's then have 15 days to undertake a Rapid Review of the situation. The Rapid Review may recommend that all the learning has been achieved as part of the Rapid Review process so there's no need to progress to a more detailed review such as a local or national Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR).
- Unlike local and national CSPRs, Rapid Review reports are not published. We want to make sure that the learning from our Plymouth Rapid Reviews is shared as wide as possible so this briefing aims to share the learning themes

1. Understanding the historical context
2. High risk moments
3. Working with those that cause harm
4. Professional curiosity & the power of language
5. Information sharing
6. Impact of managers

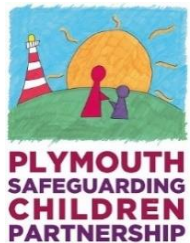


Let's take a look at these in more detail.....



1. Understanding the historical context

- It's important to understand the historical context for a family as this can help identify patterns of worrying behaviour and if they remain a concern
- Adults that cause harm can move from one relationship to another repeating a pattern of violence or coercion and control
- There may be agency recommendations that adults don't have contact with children due to domestic abuse worries.



Understanding the historical context contd.....

Similarly, because of their vulnerability, adult victims of domestic abuse can be targeted by those with a history of causing harm and so victims can also experience a repeat pattern of being subject to abuse.



Understanding the historical context: Learning into practice

Ask yourself:

- Do I have any concerning information about an adult that others need to know to help support/safeguard children? Review your agency records to check if you do and share with relevant agencies where appropriate.
- How is a parent's/carer's history influencing their care of children now? Chronologies can help you map patterns. We have a chronology template you can access [HERE](#)
- How long has the family experienced a need for help and how long have worries existed for the child?
- What's changed in terms of the presenting situation?
- What support has already been provided to the family and has it had a positive impact?

2. High risk moments

There are specific moments when domestic abuse can escalate. These include during and post separation and during pregnancy. Motivating this escalation is the fear felt by the person causing harm that they are losing control over their victim, therefore they increase the severity of the abuse in order to reassert their influence and power. These are significantly risky times for families.



High risk moments: Learning into practice

If you are supporting a family in these high risk moments seek safeguarding guidance from your supervisor/manager as risk needs to be re-assessed and support carefully thought through to take account of the potential for escalation. Share with your supervisor that you're aware these moments can be high risk and support for the family needs to be reviewed.

If you are a supervisor, as mentioned, the support and plan for the family will need to be reviewed including considering referral to enhanced, specialist or safeguarding services.



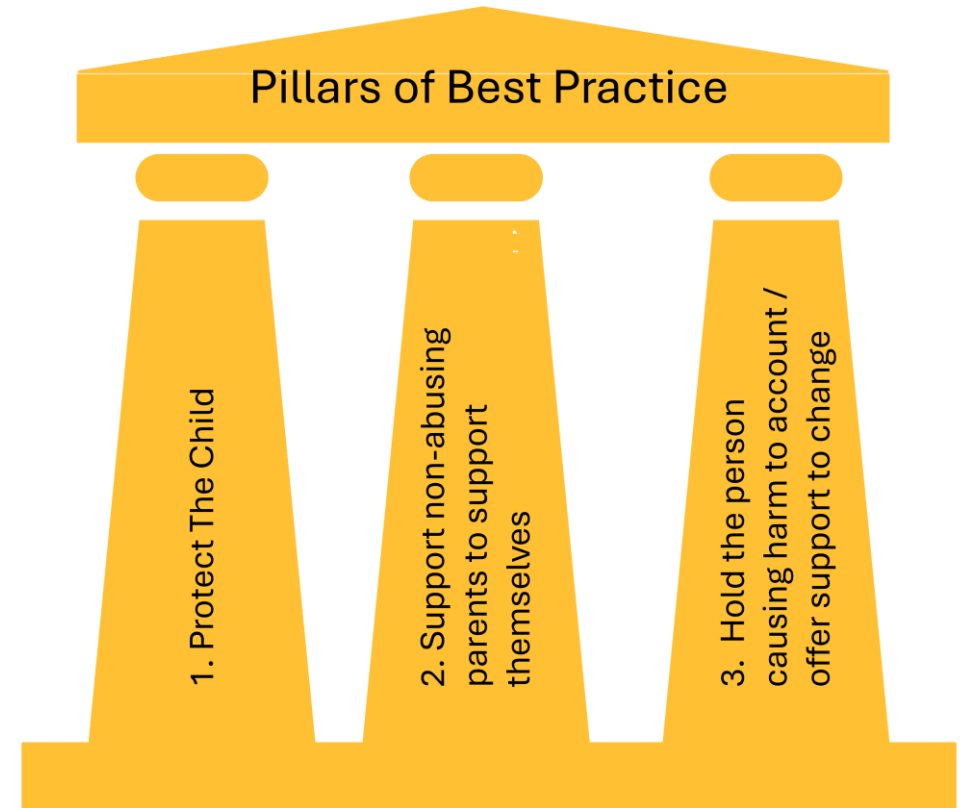
3. Working with those that cause harm

In our response to domestic abuse the safety of child and adult victims is a priority. We also need to consider the person that is causing the harm so they can be held accountable for their behaviour and be supported to change. If we don't do this there is a likelihood of harm continuing in the current and future relationships

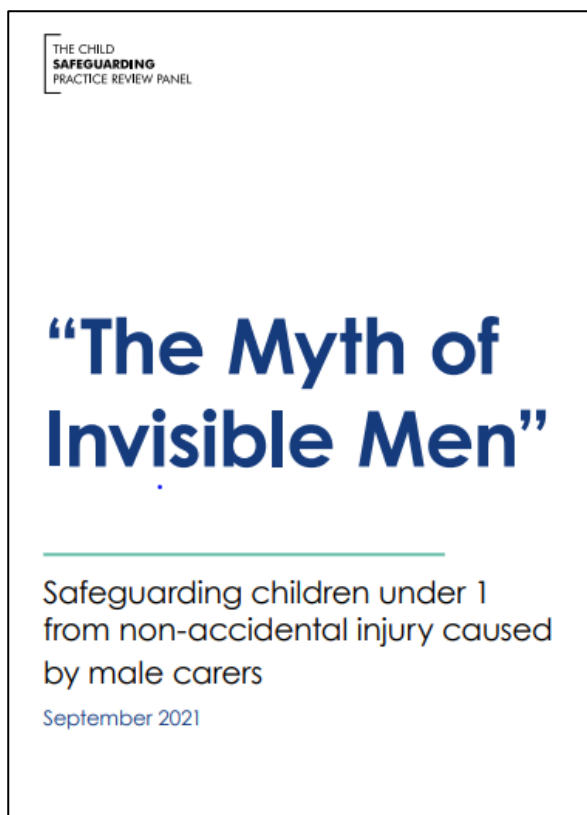


Working with those who cause harm: Learning into practice

Always take a whole family approach. This means placing emphasis on protecting the child, engaging and supporting the non-abusive parent and holding the person causing harm to account. This is known as the 3 Pillars of Best Practice. Find out more about this [HERE](#)

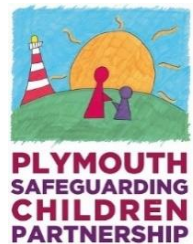


The Myth of Invisible Men: Moving Towards Male Inclusive Practice



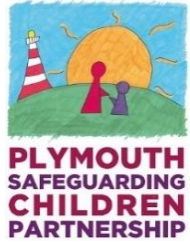
This report by the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel provides further analysis on the importance of engaging and supporting men. It is focused on the response to non accidental injuries to children under 1 caused by male carers but also includes wider messages relevant to all male inclusive practice.

The full report can be accessed [HERE](#).



4. Professional curiosity & the power of language

- The language we use with each other and families can help us understand vulnerability or have the opposite effect and lead us to not see risk and be less curious
- E.g We might label a domestic abuse victim as presenting with 'disguised compliance' or 'refusing to engage' when really their behaviour is an indicator of being coerced and controlled



Professional curiosity & the power of language contd.....

- Similarly we might be falsely reassured when a victim tells us they are not in a relationship with someone who is harming them when in reality they are still 'seeing' and having on-going contact with them
- They are not misleading you, you might just not be asking the right questions



Professional curiosity & the power of language: Learning into practice

In your conversations with victims of domestic abuse always think about how their behaviour is being influenced by the control and coercion they are being subject to. This will help you stay focused on their, and their children's vulnerability, as victims of domestic abuse. Move your conversations away from being 'transactional' i.e. you ask a question, they answer, you move on, and be more curious and 'transformational.'





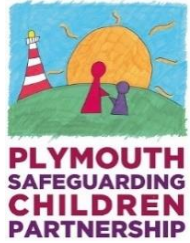
Professional curiosity & the power of language: Learning into practice contd.....

Being 'transformational' is about asking that second question based on the reply. It's about analysing and triangulating the information received and considering what that all means for the children and families involved. For example, if someone tells you they're not in a relationship with someone you could respond by saying 'Can I just ask what you mean by 'not in a relationship? Do you or the children still see them? etc.....

We have written a guide to professional curiosity which you can find [HERE](#)

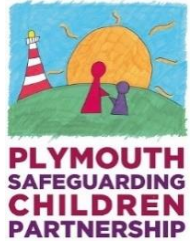
5. Information sharing

- In this rapid review there was confusion over whether consent was needed to share significant concerns with the local authority
- Agencies were wrongly advised that consent was needed but did share based on their assessment of the situation which was an example of good practice



Information sharing contd.....

- Strategy Meetings are a key moment for information sharing and to help build a picture of what life is like for a child
- It's important that all relevant agencies are invited so everyone can understand the situation and be part of the support moving forward



Information sharing contd.....

- This rapid review also highlighted the importance of being clear when organisations are asking others to 'monitor' the situation.



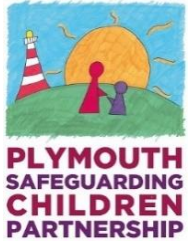
Information sharing: Learning into practice

- The Department for Education Information Sharing Advice for Practitioners 2024 sets out 7 Golden Rules for information sharing. Rule 3 states: *'You do not need consent to share personal information about a child and/or members of their family if a child is at risk or there is a perceived risk of harm.'* Please take a look at this guide which is included in our Information Sharing briefing that you can find [HERE](#)



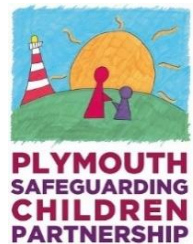
Information sharing: Learning into practice contd.....

- If you are responsible for Strategy Meetings consider inviting all agencies that are relevant to the child's life and that have a role to play in helping to safeguard them.
- When your service is not offering/able to provide help to a family avoid using the phrase, '*Health (as an example) to monitor.*' Think about what this means in reality. Does that agency have the role and level of engagement to be able to monitor any given situation? What does monitor mean? Does that agency know and understand that this is being requested of them?



6. The impact of managers

- Working with vulnerable families is complex and impactful for professionals.
- The impact of managers is crucial to help frontline workers think about the work they are doing with families and that the right type of support is being provided given the complexity of needs.



6. The impact of managers contd.....

- This review highlighted how the family could have benefited from specialist services/teams and that managers needed a greater understanding of coercive and controlling behaviour



Impact of managers: Learning into practice

If you are a manager or supervisor create a time/space for the people you support to talk about the families they are working with and reflect/review the help being provided. Consider if the level of help is right for the family or does it need more specialist support. Our domestic abuse practice guidance and toolkit also includes content on understanding coercive and controlling behaviour

The Domestic Abuse Practice Guidance & Toolkit

- The Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership (PSCP) have developed a practice guidance and toolkit to support workers in responding to domestic abuse, including coercive and controlling behaviour
- It is an online resource which can be accessed on the PSCP website

[Domestic Abuse and Child Protection - Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

