Child protection conferences - invitations and accountability

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to you, as it has been brought to my attention that there are still some professionals that believe they will receive invitations for review child protection conference. Therefore I felt it appropriate to clarify the situation.

- When an initial child protection conference (ICPC) is convened then the allocated social worker produces a list of professionals that need to be invited to that conference. This list is provided to the CP administration team who then duly invite those professionals.
- The ICPC is held – and if the decision is made that children should become subject to Child protection planning - then at the ICPC, dates are set for the next review child protection conference (RCPC) and for the date for the core group to take place. This pattern follows for any subsequent RCPC’s.
- The minutes of the ICPC will be sent out to all professionals that have attended the conference, sent apologies but identified as requiring minutes or the chair of the conference identifies requires a set of the minutes. They will also be sent to appropriate parents/carers too. The Date agreed at the ICPC for the RCPC and core group is also in the minutes.
- There are no further invitations sent from the CP administration team – as the network already know the dates of the future meetings. This is not new and has been the case for a number of years.

The most successful outcome for a child who is on CP planning is often where the right professionals (and carers) are in the same room having active discussion and making an agreed plan to move forward. When key agencies and key information is missing – I’m sure you would agree that it really can impact on the quality of the outcome of the conference.

Based on this – please can I ask the following: -

- If you join the network after the ICPC – please ensure you speak to the social worker to get the details of the core group meetings and RCPC. CP admin can also assist on giving you details regarding the RCPC and you can approach them if you feel you should have a copy of the CP minutes (and they will approach the chair to request this)

- If you are the allocated social worker – please do ensure that you let any new members of the network know that the children are on CP planning and the key dates for meetings.

- If you are unhappy with how the case is progressing, and that the CP plan is not being actively worked or agreed, then please do professionally challenge each other as a core group member – and escalate higher through line management if matters can’t be resolved.

- Please ensure, as a professional involved you provide a written report 5 days prior to the RCPC to the CP administration team (48 hours if it an ICPC) and that the family
are fully abreast of what is in your report (with the expectation that you would have shared it with the family prior to conference).

- If you are unable to attend – please still ensure your report is submitted and that you get cover via a colleague from your service (briefing them on the case so that they can actively partake in the discussions)

- If you leave your role – then please ensure, when you handover your cases, that you handover the key dates for you colleague to know.

- Likewise – if your involvement ends whilst a child is on CP planning – please do still provide a report of your involvement – and the reason why your involvement has ended ready for the network at the next RCPC.

In Southampton – we follow the strengthening family’s model when conducting child protection conference – If you are interested to know more about the ethos and philosophy of this model then we do deliver workshops on this through the weekly Wednesday workshops run from the LSCB. If you are interested in attending them please do contact the LSBC to register your interest and/or get details.

Whilst writing to you all, on behalf of the Child protection chairs, I would like to thank you for your dedication with regards to your attendance and contributions at child protection conferences in order to achieve positive outcomes for the children we work for.

If you have any questions on the above – or any other comments with regards to the child protection conferences generally then please do contact me directly on Jacqui.westbury@southampton.gov.uk