

7 Minute Briefing: Multi-Agency Audit – Child Self-Harm

7

What else?

- ❖ WSP have revised and recently launched their [Right Help Right Time](#) document in February 2024.
- ❖ GP's have access to Walsall Designated Doctor: catherine.williams15@nhs.net
- ❖ Look out for forthcoming WSP partnership events and training for all professionals to support children and young people who may self-harm or express a wish to do so and working with ASD, ADHD publicised in the WSP Spotlight newsletter and Website.
- ❖ **Subscribe to our newsletter for alerts:** www.walsallsp.co.uk



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Why?

- Children and young people may self-harm or express a wish to do so as they grow and develop for a range of reasons such as social, familial and environmental challenges such as the Covid-19 pandemic.
- For professionals, self-harm or thoughts of self-harm are a key concern when working with children and young people and the sooner that effective support can be offered can reduce the impact on their emotional wellbeing and mental health.
- Multi-agency audits provide an opportunity to evaluate how well professionals have worked together to improve outcomes and any learning.

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What you can do to improve your practice

- All partners have reviewed their 'Was not brought' and discharge policies. How well are you applying this in your current practice?
- Turning point, Walsall is a multi-disciplinary team that supports young people from 10-18 and families with specialist knowledge in areas such as youth services, children's adolescent and mental health service, social care and substance use to prevent family breakdown.
- Papyrus, Kooth and Young Minds are national services who provide support to children, young people, parents, carers and professional. Are you identifying the right type of support with families and as part of your multi-agency work?



2

What did we do?

A 'deep dive' audit of 5 randomly selected children being provided support through Early Help (level 3) or Child in Need or Protection plans (level 4). All the children considered in the audit had a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder with a few also having attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Agencies from Schools, School Nursing, Children Social Care, GP's/Primary Care, Children's Social Care, West Midlands Police, Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (BCHT), were involved. Overall, the panel rated multi-agency practice in relation to two of the audits as good and the other three as requires improvement.

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What can you do to improve your practice?

All professionals should refer to the Right Help Right Time guidance to make a professional judgement on what response is required for a child or young person. Use chronologies and genograms as relationship-based assessment tools when exploring the family history and when understanding factors such as adverse childhood experiences and trauma. Develop a range of creative engagement styles and tools when working with children and young people to help you to understand their lived experience. Effective multi-agency meetings with families enable robust plans to be developed which include contingencies if support needs or concerns increase.

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Areas for Development

Professionals need to improve their understanding of each child's ASD and/or ADHD diagnosis in addition to the self-harm concerns to understand what it means for their day-to-day lived experience. Chronologies were not used to understand children and young people's experiences within their family histories. Better co-ordination of information particularly from health services was required to understand children's needs. Gaps in the provision of specialised support identified due to waiting lists for CAMHS support. Plans were developed and owned by the lead professional agency rather than the multi-agency group with the family.

3

Good Practice

Generally, self-harm was viewed in the context of children and young people's previous experiences, familial, social and environmental factors enabling root causes as well as presenting concerns/ behaviours to be considered. Effective support in relation to self-harm was provided at an early stage for some children and young people. Professionals were skilled in working with children and family members who were at points of challenge and crisis. Walsall's, Turning Point service, provided a high level of support for two children.