



Eyes on – Enhancing our Practice

Learning from the audit: Thresholds in the Safeguarding System

A Summary:

The audit was checking if there is a common understanding of the threshold matrix and criteria. Thirty six children's cases from across the county were reviewed at the four threshold points:

- Front door
- Children being made subject to a child protection plan
- Children ceasing a child protection plan
- Children ceasing involvement with children's social care

Findings

- **Common tools** such as the threshold of need matrix or neglect tool could be better understood and used more consistently to record and measure concern
- **Information sharing** could be more consistent when making referrals in to children's social care
- **Decision-making and management of risk** would be better if it was better shared and evidenced
- **Timely processes** are generally in place
- **Positive working relationships** make multi-agency working go well

Themes in common with other audits in Oxfordshire

- ✓ Neglect tool kit to be better embedded
- ✓ Joint planning could be stronger
- ✓ Managing risk on a multi-agency basis could be improved
- ✓ Holding partners to account is in our interest

Three learning points for managers

- **Reflection:** Seek to examine case management processes and ensure that management decisions and oversight are clearly evidenced and recorded
- **Direction:** ensure that practitioners are using all available tools especially the threshold of needs matrix and 'neglect tools' [Awareness of Neglect | Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board](#) and plan actions in a smart way
- **Check:** that there is good information sharing of minutes and that step up / down processes are shared well across services and agencies

Action points for practitioners making referrals

- **Remind yourself of the threshold of needs matrix** to ensure you make the right kind of referral and know what to expect



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- **Understand** when you need to consider a CAF, refer to the early intervention service or contact children's social care
- **Use the referral form** and provide complete information to the best quality that you can
- **Be consistent** support a family throughout the time that they receive safeguarding support, contribute to decisions, help determine risk and think through contingency plans

Key messages for inter-agency learning

- Promote the guide to good multi agency working and check out the procedures
- Reinforce a shared use and understanding of the threshold of need matrix.
- Embed a shared use and understanding of the neglect tool.

Take the time to reflect...

- Make decisions that you have confidence in. A reflective approach enables the decision maker to examine why the decision was made and based on what information.

Reminder to practitioners

- **OSCB online training** – the OSCB offers a variety of face-to-face and online courses to suit most safeguarding needs. If there is a course you feel we should be running, tell us! [Training | Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board](#)
- **Multi-agency safeguarding procedures** – The OSCB multi-agency procedures cover a wide variety of situations you may encounter. You can access them at <http://oxfordshirescb.proceduresonline.com/>
- **Thresholds document** – Professionals need to know the thresholds for accessing services within Oxfordshire. The OSCB has on the website a copy of the Thresholds document. You can access it here: http://www.oscb.org.uk/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/Threshold%20of%20Needs%20Matrix.pdf
- **Good multi-agency practice guidance** – The OSCB have created a model of good multi-agency practice incorporating the Local Assessment Protocol. http://www.oscb.org.uk/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/OSCB%20Local%20Assessment%20Protocol.pdf
- **Seven Golden Rules for Information Sharing** – Professionals should familiarise themselves with the golden rules for sharing information. There is a downloadable flyer available on the OSCB website: http://portal.oxfordshire.gov.uk/content/publicnet/other_sites/oscb/documents/professionals/Neglect/7_Golden_Rules.pdf
- **No Names Consultation** – Use the no names consultation service for advice and information on a child or young person, without having to divulge full information. Contact your Locality Social Worker who will advise you on next steps and whether you need to make a referral

North: 01865 323039

South: 01865 323041

City: 01865 328563