Did you know that poor oral health could be an indicator of neglect?

Poor oral health impacts on children and families wellbeing. It suggests wider health and social care issues such as poor nutrition, obesity, the need for parenting support, and in some instances safeguarding and neglect. Children who have toothache or who need treatment may have to be absent from school.
Summary of Key Themes:

Issues

- It was noted that within 2 of the Luton cases the GCP2 was completed in just 2 visits - which is against the training guidance which states at least 3-4 visits. The cases identified some issues of expectations and resources which will need to be reviewed.
- In most cases the GCP2 was completed by an individual worker rather than in conjunction with another professional.
- Some of the GCP2's reviewed where the child was already on a CP Plan seemed rushed and completed as a tick box exercise.
- However, there were others that showed the GCP2 was integrated well into the CP and other processes such as Team Around Family (TAF) and informed assessments and care plans.
- Some cases identified that one profile was completed for several children in a family. In one case the youngest was 4 months old and the oldest 16 years old and hence there would have been a need to recognise differences in need. The expectation about whether a GCP2 is completed for all individual children in a family is different across Bedfordshire.
- There was some confusion regarding the purpose of the GCP2. It is a measurement tool that can be used alongside/in conjunction with other assessments.
- Only 3 out of the 9 cases evidenced that the GCP2 was discussed as part of supervision. In some cases, this could be implied but there was no evidence for the auditor to see that.
- In some cases, the audit group thought the GCP2 had been completed too late. For example, this was requested as part of a CP Plan or part of legal proceedings.

Good Practice;

- The GCP2 is helping practitioners to measure parenting capacity
- In some cases the GCP2 helped to inform other assessments and the care plan, provide evidence to step cases up to Child Protection and identified immediate actions to be taken.
- In one case the GCP2 helped the social worker to reflect that they might be too close to the family and therefore another worker was invited to review the family.
- There were some good examples of interventions and impact.
- In most cases the GCP2 did help to identify the issues occurring within the families and be clear if they were neglect related (in one case it became clear the causal factor was housing). Plus the scoring element of the GCP2 helped both practitioners and families to reflect on what was happening.

Areas for development;

- Training and/or written guide for the wider professional community i.e. teachers, GP’s etc. to help them understand the use and impact of GCP2’s. Further training needed around scoring of GCP2’s.
- In one case scoring was very high at 1 across a number of domains and it was questioned if this was realistic
- Clarification around the purpose of the GCP2’s needed
- Assurance that the GCP2 training takes account of the learning from this audit
- Further engagement needed with fathers – to be included within the training
- Heightened supervision for practitioners who work with families over a period of time in order to help them maintain their professional curiosity over the course of contact with the family and not get ‘stuck’.

Multi-agency working

- In the last audit there was evidence that profiles were completed by 2 workers (generally multi-agency). This audit suggested there was a significant change as all the audits were completed by individual workers. This is step away from the good practice that had been established. This could be related just to the sample of cases chosen and data should be used to understand if GCP2 is completed multiagency or not. This links into recording methodology for GCP2.

Differences

- Thresholds across the 3 Local Authorities are different
- Luton mandate that a GCP2 needs to be completed for every child – some family GCP2’s are completed within Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire.

Actions:

- 1 page ‘top tips and clear messages’ for the wider audience
- Guidance across the 3 Local Authority area which answer the following:
  - When should a case be reviewed?
  - What should be reviewed?
  - How do we carry out the review?
  - Re-audit of these 9 cases (6-9 months’ time)
  - LSCB’s to re-design the audit tool as some practitioners found it confusing
  - Each local authority area to provide assurances to the Pan Bedfordshire Neglect Group that there are enough licensed practitioners trained for each area.

For access to the Pan Bedfordshire multi-agency child protection procedures please go to http://bedfordscb.proceduresonline.com/index.htm.
For more information about the GCP2 please go to https://www.nspcc.org.uk/services-and-resources/childrens-services/graded-care-profile/