

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
23 AUGUST 2021

TRAUMA AND HORIZON SCANNING

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide an outline and overview of 'Trauma Informed Practice' and how Children's Services are starting to embed and respond to Trauma.

Summary

2. To outline how Children's Services will work towards becoming a Trauma Informed Service.

Recommendation

3. It is recommended that:
 - (a) The contents of the report are considered in terms of Children's Services enhancing the Relational Practice Framework based on a whole system Trauma Informed approach, where considering trauma is a key starting point for all interactions and interventions.

JAMES STROYAN
Group Director of People

Background Papers

Research background papers were used in the completion of this report.

Jane Kochanowski: jane.kochanowski@darlington.gov.uk

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report supports the Council's Crime and Disorder responsibilities
Health and Wellbeing	This report supports to health and wellbeing of children, young people and families in the borough.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	This report supports the Council's sustainability responsibilities
Diversity	This report supports the promotion of diversity
Wards Affected	This report supports performance improvement across all Wards
Groups Affected	This report supports performance improvement which benefits all groups

Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
Council Plan	This report contributes to the Council Plan by involving Members in the scrutiny of performance relating to the delivery of key outcomes
Efficiency	There are no implications arising from this report.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report supports the health and wellbeing of Looked After Children and Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

What do we mean by Trauma?

4. Trauma is conceptualised in a broad spectrum, from the impact of poverty to the significant events that can be thought of in terms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (having a clear clinical start point). Trauma for children, young people and families can also occur via interaction with professionals and organisations, particularly when the approach does not follow a relational and strength-based methodology.
5. Traumatic events are often unexpected, outside of ordinary experiences. They can take away a sense of being in control and can often involve actual or perceived threat to life. Trauma can mentally overwhelm individuals and their ability to cope in that moment.
6. Impact - The more threatened the child is, the more 'primitive' or regressed the style of thinking becomes. When a child is traumatised and in a state of alarm, they are less able to concentrate, will be more anxious and will pay attention to non-verbal clues such as tone of voice, body posture and facial expressions. Ongoing and persistent trauma requires developing coping strategies.

What do we mean by Trauma Informed Practice?

7. Trauma Informed Practice is relational and strengths-based, grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma, that emphasises physical, psychological, and emotional safety for everyone, and that creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment (Hopper et al., 2010).
8. Trauma Informed Practice requires a Whole System Approach, ranging from understanding the impact of trauma on the workforce, on partner organisations and most importantly on the children, young people and families of Darlington.

Trauma Informed Practice in Children's Services 2021/22:

9. In Children's Services our overarching practice methodology is based on Strengthening Families and Relational Practice. Trauma Informed Practice will fit seamlessly into this well embedded approach to working with families. It will provide staff from across the service with additional knowledge, skills and tools in order to work in a Trauma Informed way.

10. Staff in Children's Services have fed back that they feel we need to be Trauma Informed and are keen to learn more about Trauma Informed approaches. They feel that it will benefit the children, young people and families they work with; will support them in terms of the potential development of clinical supervision approaches and feel that being a Trauma Informed organisation will help support the recruitment and retention of staff.
11. *Understanding Trauma Informed Practice* – On 31st August 2021 Children's SLT (Senior Leadership Team) are meeting with potential training providers to outline a 4 Step Training Model for staff across the service. The steps (The 4 R's) focus on Relationship, Resilience, Reconnection and Recovery.
12. *Developing a Trauma Informed Workforce* – It is key to outline that becoming a Trauma Informed Service isn't a "quick win". Although Children's Services have an extremely strong foundation in terms of the Strength Based and Relational Practice methodology that is embedded in all aspects of the service, Trauma Informed Practice is more than just a one-off training course for staff. Throughout 2021 and 2022 Children's Services will look to offer Trauma Informed Training, briefings, tools and resources, including the potential development of a Trauma Informed Practice Manual. The aim is to embed Trauma Informed starting points into all related training and development programmes, linking to student placements, apprenticeships, Step Up to Social Work programme and ASYE Newly Qualified Social Worker programmes.
13. *Maintaining a Trauma Informed Approach* – the introduction of Trauma Informed systems and processes – e.g. the development of Clinical Supervision approaches and ensuring Trauma Informed Practice is embedded in our Strengthening Families Relational Practice methodologies, particularly regarding the voice of the child and the views of our own teams will be central to developing a Whole System Approach to Trauma Informed Practice.