

### 1 Background

North Lincolnshire Children's MARS Board hold a range of scrutiny events across different themes as part of our [Scrutiny and Assurance Framework](#).

After a process of single agency case audits, a panel of Children's MARS representatives and an Independent Scrutiny Officer meet with practitioners to discuss a small number of cases. We identify areas of best practice, learning and further improvement relating to multi agency practice then agree any actions.

### 2 Why it matters?

During the COVID-19 pandemic, nationally it has been highlighted that there are concerns over increasing incidents involving babies and young children and that pressures on families with new babies have increased and risks have amplified.

This event was an opportunity for Children's MARS Board representatives to seek assurance as to the quality and effectiveness of multi-agency practice and how partner agencies are working to fulfill their safeguarding responsibilities. Partners were also able to explore whether there were any areas for further improvement in providing help and protection across multi agency working.

### 3 Good practice

- The values and principals of the One Family Approach are being demonstrated within practice and practitioners were able to confidently articulate how they approached their practice within this context
- Practice is of a high quality and the panel were assured that babies and young children are receiving the right support and care at the right time and level
- The workforce is strong, consistent, flexible and skilled. There were positive examples of professionals working according to the needs of the child and family. Relational practice was evident
- Examples of practitioners using research and evidence-based tools to inform assessments and planning
- Engagement with fathers was evident
- There were positive examples of how culture, ethnicity and disabilities were considered

### 4 Key learning

- Communication is key to ensuring professionals feel their voices are heard within planning, and to ensure a shared understanding of risk
- It is important that new police officers understand how to recognise risk to unborn babies and make appropriate referrals to Children's Services
- Senior leaders should check the support provided to under 16s attending antenatal appointments alone within the context of COVID
- We should continue to strengthen our integrated working with families with young children or who are expecting a baby, with a focus on antenatal notifications between midwifery and the 0-19 service

### 5 Next steps

- An overview of the event is presented to the Safeguarding Practice Learning and Improvement Group (SPLIG) for consideration. Actions from the event will be monitored and reviewed as part of the Children's MARS scrutiny and assurance action plan.

### 6 Reflect on the learning

To inform your practice you can

- Discuss this area of work with your supervisor in the context of helping and protecting babies and young children
- Take a look at the Children's MARS briefing – Helping and Protecting Babies and Young Children

### 7 Further information

- [One Family Approach - Helping Children and Families in North Lincolnshire Document](#)
- [Children's MARS policy and procedure for assessing need and providing help](#)
- [Children's MARS policy and procedure for early help](#)
- [Children's MARS briefing – Helping and Protecting Babies and Young Children](#)

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