

Safeguarding Disabled Children and Young People

15 November 2013

Queens University Belfast

1. Meeting Briefing Notes

Purpose: Attendees agreed to reflect on the key themes and to identify current policy and practice.

- No research in Northern Ireland on disability and safeguarding but a lot of interest.
- Difficulties around defining population and agreement on how to capture.
- Importance highlighted on listening to young people and develop awareness.
- Data collection different – from that on child protection register to the numbers claiming disability allowance.
- Review of Social Services in Scotland. Need to improve systems. Practitioners also reporting they were struggling to define.
- Discussion around the application of thresholds in relation to risk? Where these lower for children with a disability
- Disability Services sometimes struggle with Gateway thresholds.
- Awareness raising/Education in relation to child protection / safeguarding and disability was required.
- Role of special education was discussed.
- Clarity was required in relation to what was recorded on the child protection register, what was on the system and on notes
- Important role for schools counselling
- Data collection action was required
- Childline support into special education called for
- Recommendation to undertake an audit in each of the Panels on child protection and disability threshold.
- SOLACE / local Gov. Initiative and training.
- Scoping – where are children present.

- Funding issues – children disability services is funded through Bamford and adult services
- Disjoint between disability policies in the department in department).
- No lead for children disability in the department.
- Should be inter - ministerial group on disability.

2. Key Actions

- Findings from existing research circulated.
- Undertake research with child protection register and thresholds. What is the extent of safeguarding needs for those children with disability?
- Similar review to that with LAC children required within the child protection field.
- Understand the experiences of children, yp and families.
- Understand the issues from professionals
- What training and guidance is provided.
- Policy development arising from the research findings