

Two days in the life of Bexley Safeguarding Partnership for Children and Young People

Monday 29th and Tuesday 30th April 2019 – we're into month 7 of Bexley's new partnership arrangements and two days of learning and reflection! Our operating model for these two days has our Learning Hub meeting (the practice group examining our system responses to parental mental health) on the Monday morning finalising its recommendations for our Partnership Board to consider in the afternoon. We meet as a whole child protection multi-agency system on the Tuesday morning to hear more fully about these recommendations and to launch the next practice priority for the Learning Hub to work on – its first meeting takes place on the Tuesday afternoon to agree its programme of activity.

Monday 29th April 10am

Learning Hub members for the partnership's second priority – *responding effectively to the mental ill health of parents so that they are supported to give their children the best start* – have arrived for the final session of the Hub's initial work. We hear the headlines from 40 interviews with parents about their mental health and well-being as well as the findings from a series of multi-agency audits where parental mental health was flagged in the child or young person's care. By 12.30pm, Hub members have discussed and agreed 9 recommendations for our Partnership Board to consider.

Monday 29th April 2pm

Our partnership police lead from the South East Basic Command Unit calls our Partnership Board meeting to order and we hear straight away from our colleagues from Bexley Clinical Commissioning Group who have led the Learning Hub's work on parental mental health. Each table of Board members is talking through the 'hot off the press' list of recommendations we have just been given and we are helping to refine the list which we will shortly sign off. We also hear back about progress with our first priority – *reducing the number of children and young people missing from home or care including those subjected to criminal and sexual exploitation* – this is now an action plan that the Police are leading. Tomorrow we hear that the third priority – *getting basic child protection right* – will be launched. We also hear from Mark Finnis, the Director of L30 Relational Systems, by way of an introduction to restorative practice. Mark is coming to our events tomorrow to engage with our Hub members and wider group of practitioners, to help us think about connection before content and a whole host of other things!

Tuesday 30th April 9.30am

The partnership operations team are signing practitioners in and directing them and their cup of coffee into our system learning event – there are 100 of us here this morning to be brought up to speed with what our partnership is doing. It's a motivated system wanting to do well for children and their families. This is the magic of new and authentic partnership. The Director of Children's Services sets the scene for our partnership's third priority. Bexley's independent scrutineer reflects on the changes our partnership is wanting to see within the practice space. Mark Finnis helps us think about 3 key issues relating to basic child protection – what makes a good multi-agency child and family assessment, how we communicate as a system of practitioners, and how we understand the levels of need our children and young people may have and what the best support is we can offer. Now the Deputy Managing Director from Bexley CCG is taking us through the Learning Hub's recommendations on parental mental health that the Partnership Board agreed yesterday. A timeline for the CCG reporting back on progress with this priority's action plan and, most importantly, when they will tell us about the difference this work has made to children and families, is shared. A parent is telling us about her experiences of how services supported her with her own mental health at the time of her second pregnancy and how her husband was feeling at this time. We just have time to be introduced to the new perinatal mental health service in Bexley before the event is drawn to a close.

Tuesday 30th April 2.00pm

We are facing each other in a circle as our first Learning Hub session on the partnership's third priority begins. We are learning to work differently with each other in terms of our behaviours –

connection before content. We are all sharing. The partnership's operations team have been busy examining a whole host of evidence – from practice audits, family and young people's feedback, from quality assurance exercises, from case reviews outside of Bexley – they present an overview of their research and an initial list of basic child protection practice issues that the Hub is going to 'fix'. We develop our plans for the next two months through further table discussions. We check out at the end of the meeting with each other. Everyone speaks. It's already starting to feel different.