



Domestic abuse scenario - early years

DSL Information Sheet

Questions for the DSL to facilitate a discussion:

- Is there reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect? In what way?
- How might your setting deal with the issue of consent?
- Who needs to be involved in exploring these concerns?

Analysis

- There is reason to suspect Amy has experienced domestic abuse, and that this was witnessed by Billy. As a result, enquiries need to be made.
- At this stage it is not clear that Amy is safe.
- There is evidence of impact on child – Billy is displaying and verbalising that he is worried. Over time such experiences could cause significant harm and affect Billy's relationships with others. It is not clear how long there has been domestic abuse.
- How does this situation scale on your safeguarding partnership threshold tool? In our view this situation warrants contact with children's social care.
- At this point we only have what Billy has said and how he has behaved. We also know that Amy and Kev have changed their pattern around who brings him to school, but we need to liaise with other agencies before going much further.

Action

- It would be sensible to try to speak to Amy and establish her immediate safety perhaps on a pretext. Telephone and ask how she is, surprised not seen her this week, etc. Be aware father may be around and listening.
- At first reasonable opportunity talk directly to Amy about domestic abuse, make information available, local groups, support and compassion.
- Advise Amy about the referral to children's social care
- Record the concern with the background and your analysis. Make a referral to children's social care because of likely impact of significant harm – the most likely outcome is agreement school will talk to family
- Talk to Kev – again with support and compassion, ensure you are holding



hypotheses lightly. Learn what happened at the weekend. Think about stressors and difficulties. Again, talk directly about domestic abuse, make information available, local groups etc. Tricky work but needs done!

- Have increased awareness of Billy; provide natural opportunities to talk if he needs to. If he does talk remember: do not interrogate, ask open questions
- What is happening more widely in the setting to raise the profile of domestic abuse? Information around the setting, covered in curriculum etc.