

23 November 2021

## Subject

### **Child social services - connection between childhood experiences and future parenting abilities**

#### **1. Is there any connection between childhood experiences and future parenting abilities? Can you supply evidence to back up your response?**

Within the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Children's Community Services, social workers will discuss with parents their social histories as part of the overall assessment process. This is important as it helps develop an understanding of any adverse childhood experiences (ACE's) experienced by parents. When children experience trauma, understanding the impact of ACE's can lead to more trauma informed interventions that help to mitigate negative outcomes. While ACE'S are linked to, for example, chronic health problems, mental illness and substance misuse problems, not all adults / parents who experience ACE's will experience these negative outcomes in adulthood. There exists considerable research and evidence to support the need for practitioners to have both a knowledge and skills base in this area so that they can support parents in providing a safe, secure and nurturing environment for their children.

#### **2. Do professionals like Cafcass, Guardian ad litem, Psychologists etc have access to child social services paperwork prior to doing their assessments? If so what type of information is shared and is this only in child social services vs parents or also in custody disputes?**

Where professionals / disciplines are involved in undertaking assessments of children, in general, it will be important for them to know if other professionals have previously or are currently involved with the child / family and to share information so as to help inform the assessment process. Information sharing between professionals are premised on a number of key principles: that the information shared is necessary, justified and proportionate. Consent to share information will also be a consideration.

#### **3. Do child social services share paperwork, even historical with other child social services areas for example from Coventry to South Yorkshire and if so under what circumstances?**

The sharing / transfer of Children's Services casework files will be determined by a number of factors and will for the most part be case specific. Please refer to the principles for sharing information as per response to question 2.

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**4. How often is misinformation passed between different child social services areas and what can the person that misinformation pertains to do about it?**

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust is regrettable unable to answer the requestor question in the absence of knowing what the requestor determines as “misinformation”. However, where there exists data breaches or where inaccurate information is shared, such matters are, for example, reported by the Trust to the Information Commissioners Office or addressed by the Trusts Complaints procedures.