

Multi-agency Working Policy

Rochdale Connections Trust fully understand the need for effective multi-agency working and information sharing if individuals are to be offered the range of support they require in a timely manner. Multi-agency working is about providing a seamless response to individuals with multiple and complex needs. We are wholly committed to achieving better information sharing and collaboration between agencies so that professionals can fully understand any risks a child or vulnerable adult may be exposed to and can take appropriate and timely action to keep them safe.

Everyone who works with children and vulnerable adults has a responsibility to share any information that has a bearing on an individual's welfare as early as possible. Practitioners working in adults' services should also share any information that has an impact on the wellbeing of a child - for example information about parents' capacity to provide safe and loving care.

Staff at Rochdale Connections Trust are expected to operate in accordance with the guidelines laid out in our Safeguarding Policies for Children and for Vulnerable Adults when engaging in multi-agency working; how to share information and with who. Consideration should also be given to the guidance provided below:

COMMUNICATION

Be clear about what you are sharing and why

For example, are you making a child protection referral which needs to be acted up on or are you letting people know for information only?

Follow up with written documentation

All verbal and face-to-face communication should be followed up with clear and comprehensive written documentation.

Use specific language and describe risk and vulnerability in detail

Different teams and agencies may use different terminology, so ensure you use clear language. If there is a form for information sharing, use it - it will help other people understand what information you are sharing or requesting and why.

Acknowledge information that's been shared with you

If possible, you should also let them know what's happened as a result of the information they've shared. When people feel their contribution is valued, they are more likely to communicate in future.

TEAM WORK

Those staff working in a multi-disciplinary or multi-agency team must make sure they understand their and everyone else's role. Discuss how you will work together to support a child, family or vulnerable adult.

Think about other teams working with a child, family or vulnerable adult and whether there is any information you can share that will help them to provide support. It's particularly important to have a comprehensive handover whenever an individual or family starts to work with a new practitioner or a different team.

Parents should receive the same messages from practitioners in different agencies. If several agencies are working with a family it might be helpful to identify a trusted key individual who will liaise with parents.

SUPPORT AND CHALLENGE

It's vital for practitioners to build trusting working relationships with each other. Members of a multi-agency team should feel equally respected and listened to. However, you should always discuss and explore any differences in opinion. This will help you gain a greater understanding of an individual's situation and make informed decisions about the appropriate action to take.

If you have any concerns about the action being taken to protect a child or vulnerable adult, you must raise these following Rochdale Connections Trust's organisational procedures.

Rochdale Connections Trust are committed to providing their staff with regular and ongoing training and supervision in order that they can reflect on and improve their practice.

Multi-agency Work in the Domestic Violence and Abuse Arena

Multi-agency working is central to contemporary policy and practice approaches to safeguarding children and domestic violence and abuse work. Its rationale lies in an understanding that the needs of children and families are multi-dimensional and inter-linked – and meeting these requires integrated and joined up services. There are many different contexts for multi-agency working in domestic violence and abuse and safeguarding children each with different configurations and purpose. Examples of operational multi-agency work include child protection case conferences, Child in Need (CIN) or Team Around the Child (TAC) meetings, the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) as well as joint visiting and/or information sharing between professionals working with the same family/client. Strategic multi-agency working includes forums such as the

Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and local domestic abuse partnerships; these have different statutory responsibilities and functions but bring together agencies to plan, monitor and develop work. Rochdale Connections Trust are key stakeholders in all of these forums.

Multi-agency developments such as the MARAC focus upon the risks posed by perpetrators. MARACs are specifically concerned with high risk cases and whilst they may not be integrated with multi-agency safeguarding children approaches they have generated interest in the multi-agency utilisation of risk assessment approaches to domestic abuse.

Despite the plethora of multi-agency initiatives there remain many challenges to ensure that women and children affected by domestic violence and abuse are safe and supported. Rochdale Connections Trust endeavour to engage and inform all key partner's as part of our processes relating to working with male perpetrators and keeping women and children safe.

REVIEW SCHEDULE:

The Multiagency Working Policy is formally reviewed on an annual basis.

Date of last review: November 2021

Reviewed by: Lizl Donnelly

Job Role: Business Support Manager

Date of next Review: November 2022