



Back to Basics - Home Visits

There are many things which we do in Children's Social Care and Early Help that are what you might call the 'basics', but the real basic basics is the home visit. This is where the real face to face, direct work with children and families happens.



So this month's Wiki Leeks is devoted to getting back to basics in looking at how we might improve on home visits. In 2013 I put together a Home Visit Checklist similar to what pilots and surgeons use to cover the basics; there is an update ...

BEFORE THE VISIT Plan

Planning 1 – making the most of the time

- Is it clear why are you visiting?
- What do you need to take with you – prepared questions, copy of plan, materials for any direct work
- How much time do you need for the journey and the time spent at the home?
- Are you clear about the address?

Planning 2 – staying safe

- Are there any risks with this visit?
- Do you need to take anyone with you?
- Are your visit details & time back on the board?
- Have you arranged a check up/check in call?
- Have you parked for a safe departure?
- Does your phone have a signal?



DURING THE VISIT Do

- Be clear about the purpose of the visit with the family
- Do the family have issues they want to talk about?
- Have you specific work you have planned to undertake with the family?
- Do you need to look around the house? Have you seen the whole house?
- Have you explained why?
- Do you need to see the child/ren on their own?
- Do you need to talk to anyone else on their own?

Think 'EARS'

Use EARS to develop questioning conversations to gather information

- E** Elicit – First Question
- A** Amplify – Gather details
- R** Reflect – Look at the meaning
- S** Start Over – New question

Direct Work with Children

- Three Houses
- Words and Pictures
- Safety House
- Have you covered everything you intended/have you achieved what you planned to do?
- Have you checked out or challenged anything you are unsure about?

AFTER THE VISIT Record and Review

Write up the visit

Purpose:

- What was the reason for the visit?

Participants:

- Who did you see?
- Did you see the child on their own?

Brief Summary:

- What did you see and hear?
- What were the main issues?
- What are you worried about?
- What's working well?

Child's Voice:

- If seen is the Child's voice clearly recorded?

Actions:

- What have you agreed to do?
- When will you do this?
- Have you arranged the next visit?

Analysis

- What have you learnt from the visit?
- What do you think about the situation?
- What needs to happen?

Think Chronology

- Is this a significant event that needs to go in the Chronology?
- Tick the significant event box and give the recording a meaningful title

When I last put together a 'check list' the reactions ranged from seeing it as a good idea to questioning the need for something so basic. All I would say is that pilots take off and land hundreds of times and still check out everything before hand, and the surgeons basic check list has saved lives so worth a think about. What's on your own check list? Let me know if you can improve on mine!

Recording

A vital part of any visit is the write up afterwards and I've suggested a proforma for recording which was in use throughout Children's Social Care. Here are two recordings of the same visit, one without any headings and the other with them. Do you think it makes a difference?

Child Protection Visit

Announced visit to see the family. Mandy said that Harry had had contact with his dad this weekend and it all went off okay. She said that Gary had actually been quite pleasant towards her during the handover and was back on time. Harry seemed happy about the contact and wanted to go again. Mandy and I went through the words we had put together last time to tell Harry about why he and his Mum split up and why I come to see him.

Mandy said that she wasn't really very good at drawing so I said I would do it and take it for her and Harry to look at next time. She was pleased with what we had written last time but changed where she had put that Harry's Dad was nasty to her, to that he used to shout and tell her what to do all the time. She also wanted to change the bit where she said she wanted to make sure Harry was okay about contact to saying that she and Gary would make sure that Harry could see his dad as long as this was what he wanted and that it was safe for everyone.

202 words



Child Protection Visit

Purpose: Arranged visit to go through the draft of Harry's words and pictures explanation of the reason for the child protection plan

Participants: Saw Mandy at her home with Harry. I saw Harry on his own briefly while Mandy was making drinks and spoke to him while his Mum was present.

Brief Summary:

- House clean and tidy
- Harry playing on the floor with his toy cars while Mandy looked at the draft words for the words and pictures
- She changed one or two phases and agreed that I should draw the pictures – see final draft on Fwi
- I spoke to Harry while he was playing

Child's Voice:

- Harry told me that he saw his Dad at the weekend with his Nana Joan
- He said that he liked seeing his Dad and wanted to go every weekend

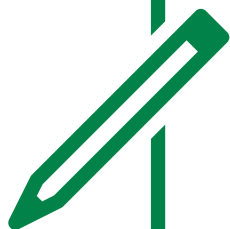
Agreed Actions:

- Arranged to go back with the completed words and pictures next week and go through them with Harry together

Analysis:

- Harry seems very settled and calm throughout the visit
- Mandy seemed much more positive about Harry's contact with his Dad
- She made some really good changes to the words and pictures that made it much clearer about the problems with Gary in the past

202 words



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