Dorset Council

Locality Learning Circles

What is a Locality Learning Circle?

A locality learning circle is an opportunity to test the quality of our work with a child and their family and to draw out key learning. It is a way of supporting practitioners by drawing on the expertise and insight of the wider team. It is also a way of testing hypotheses. A learning circle can also be used following a turning point or event in the child's story. A child may be selected because, for example:

- An outstanding or inadequate audit outcome
- Escalation of risk to the child and family members
- Manager identification through exceptions reporting / dashboard scrutiny

The Learning Circle is a collaborative, supportive and restorative process whereby practitioners in the locality come together to share experiences, perspectives, and expertise. It provides opportunity for support and challenge. It leads to specific action to ensure learning is embedded in practice.

Aims

- To undertake a review of our work
- To embed learning in practice
- To understand a child's lived experience
- To understand the lived experiences of the wider family and support network
- To unpick and explore key themes arising from the child's records and the way we have approached our work
- To support practitioners and managers in finding creative options for planning next steps

Frequency and Duration

Every calendar month, for 1 hour or as and when required by the Head of Locality

Who is involved?

- Head of Locality
- Service Manager
- Team Manager
- Practitioner(s)
- Relevant members of the locality / children's services team (including those who can provide expertise, even if not currently involved with the child)

What happens before a learning circle?

1) A child is identified by a manager, when it is clear learning would be valuable and proposes a learning circle through the Locality Management Meeting.
2) The relevant practitioners are notified by a Service Manager
3) The practitioner ensures there is an up-to-date summary on the child's record and provides a chronology of key events

4) Members of the learning circle (learners) are identified by the Team Manager and Service Manager
5) Invitations and the above documents are circulated to learners by the Team Manager (including room booking, etc.)

What happens during a learning circle?

1) Learners come together in a circle (or on a virtual platform)
2) The learners "check in" to the circle
3) The Head of Locality agrees "Ground Rules" with the group
4) A timekeeper is assigned
5) The reasons the child has been selected is shared with learners and the Head of Locality establishes areas of focus, for example:
- *We are here to understand the events that led up to the missing episodes of this young person*
- *We are here to think consider creative solutions to avoid further escalation of risk*
6) The practitioner gives a brief overview of the child's story
7) The learners ask questions, offer points of view, and consider solutions
8) Learning points and actions are agreed together and captured (e.g. on a flip chart, whiteboard or pad-let)
9) The learners "check out" of the circle

What happens after a learning circle?

1) The learning and actions are shared with the learners and QAP by the Service Manager. The team manager ensures they are recorded on the child's record as a case note
2) The relevant Team Manager(s) ensures the actions are undertaken and/or raises barriers with the Service Manager / Head of Locality
3) Themes are shared with the Quality, Performance and Action Group