

## **Keeping Children Safe – Adapting to Change and Transforming Practice**

Paper based systems inefficient and inconsistent. Staff sometimes forget signatures, date, child details; documents are out of order, filed in wrong place. Very long time to prepare for assessments, sifting through information. Have to be prepared at school, not at home, and often kept in a variety of places at school.

Investigators such as police report gaps in timelines, errors in chronology, documents incomplete or gone missing. This impacts on the success of police investigations as if not written down properly, it cannot be used. Staff often need to prepare this information in an emergency or urgently and vital things can be missed.

Online software brings clarity to process, enables larger organisations to produce consistent records, and copes better with changes in personnel. Training can also be provided online so at home, at your own pace.

### Key benefits of an effective electronic record keeping system

Access from anywhere, anytime, e.g. if made aware of a concern out of hours, can write up immediately. Copes well in lockdown situation. Records who logged the concern, when, and can order incidents chronologically. Can make links to siblings, other children etc. Can get top level figures quickly e.g. number of outstanding referrals. DSL can review entire school records easily and check for details such as appropriate/consistent language, plus also easier to see bigger picture and spot trends or related concerns.

Can easily record minor concerns re neglect e.g. arrive dirty, without lunch etc. and that builds a clearer picture of what is happening; then easily shared with all staff who have contact with that child, as appropriate. It is important to back up gut feelings with hard data. No paper also means that data is more securely kept, and levels of access can be tailored to staff role.

Some have mobile apps.

During lockdown/isolation, easy for staff to record nature of phone calls, either made or received. Hundreds of calls – all builds evidence of what's happening, both for school and external parties. Can see number of calls made, number of families contacted and not contacted, also nature of follow-up e.g. signposted to food banks.

Opportunities to network with colleagues in other schools which use your software, to share training, tips and observations.

Some products able to customise reports for leaders, governors, trust board etc. Tailor to focus on school's context. Can analyse by ethnicity, gender etc. Can also see which staff are reporting and which not. If some staff are not reporting issues which others are, is it a training issue? Better able to spot trends e.g. recent bereavement, young carers, accidents at home. Can adapt training for DSLs to react to support needs. Would also be looking for impact of training e.g. if school has an INSET on anti-bullying, can we track the subsequent change in numbers of incidents reported, as these should increase with staff awareness.

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Electronic records can follow children as they transition between education sectors e.g. primary to secondary and/or schools. Quick, complete and secure transfer. Families with Child Protection concerns may move children on frequently to mask issues. Data can be shared with new schools and LSCBs promptly and effectively.

### Some insights on safeguarding during pandemic

In this environment, children are generally not disclosing – not only are they supposed to stay 2 metres apart, maybe they have a trusted relationship with a member of staff who is not in their bubble. There was an expectation that there would be a tsunami of disclosure once schools reopened, but this hasn't happened. Why? Believe that children want to come into your space to disclose, when they feel safe and private, which they can't do currently. Therefore we expect that once restrictions ease, there will be a huge increase in workload.

National increase in reports of family bereavement, accidents at home when children are unsupervised, young carers. Is your school looking for these?

Ofsted – they will be checking that senior leaders can analyse data, and online systems support governors and leaders to do this. Even though Ofsted are not producing judgements from their current visit programme, if they find serious safeguarding concerns, they WILL put your school into a category. Do your safeguarding practices enable all to comply with guidance and policies regardless of operational restrictions?