



Day in My Life - Practitioner Briefing



Welcome, this briefing aims to help practitioners and their managers understand the importance of the lived experience of children and young people. The messages in this briefing are just as important for those practitioners working with adults who are parents.

What do we mean? Seeing the [Day in My Life](#) will help practitioners fully understand how various experiences (including abuse and neglect) impacts on children/young people, it is necessary to identify the associated risks, unmet needs and areas of resilience and therefore to understand what life is like for them on a daily basis, in the evening, during the night, at weekends and when different people are involved in their care. When we talk about the 'lived experience of the child - 'What a child/young person sees, hears, thinks and experiences on a daily basis that impacts on their personal development and welfare whether that be physically or emotionally. As practitioners we need to; actively hear what the child/young person has to say or communicate, observe what they do in different contexts, hear what family members, significant adults/carers and practitioners have said about them, and to think about history and context. Ultimately we need to put ourselves in their shoes and think 'what is life like for this child/young person right now?'

The [Day in My Life](#) tools are designed to be used alongside parents or with children (where age and development appropriate). They consist of a list of questions, or prompts, to help shape your understanding of their lived experience. They can act as a starting point for a conversation or as a useful list of questions to help form a view of the day to day care of a child. They can highlight areas of strength in the parenting and also areas in need of development. It is important to work with parents in a strength based way, otherwise parents may feel undermined and criticised and this may make them less likely to retain a relationship with you. The [So what do we know, what next? template](#) has been created to capture the outcome of discussions with children and their parents. This is a helpful way to not only capture information but also to analyse the information to inform both plans and reviews. Each tool reflects a different group of children and young people and identifies particular issues practitioners may want to consider. The Tools can be used to guide conversations, contribute to assessments of need and support identification of thresholds.

A nursery worker observes that Ahmed attends nursery late, often hungry, seems to find it difficult to concentrate and has frequent angry outbursts. He is collected by different people who are not members of the family. These factors make the nursery worker curious. They ask the mother if she can spend some time with them after she has dropped Ahmed off on a couple of mornings one week. The nursery worker explains they have seen some new behaviours in Ahmed and would like to see what ways the nursery and the mother can work together to understand them. The nursery worker has prepared a sheet of paper, which is divided into four sections with the following headings **Mornings - Child care - Afternoons after nursery - Bedtime**. The worker uses the [Day in my life - Pre-school Child](#) to explore the different aspects of Ahmed's routine. One day the worker discusses the mornings and child care arrangements, on the second morning she reflects with the mother about afternoons and bedtime routines. Together the mother and the nursery worker identify areas of Ahmed's routine that are working really well. They also both come to realise the importance of a good morning and bedtime routine - both for Ahmed and his mother, who is feeling exhausted. They complete a "So what do we know? Next Steps?" template and come up with a plan on how to build in a good morning and bedtime routine.

Kasey is 14 years old and has been referred to CAMHS as a result of concerns about his self-harming behaviours and low self-esteem. The CAMHS worker uses the [Day in my life - teenager](#) to form an initial assessment of the young person's needs. The CAMHS worker takes the list of questions and divides the questions to structure the planned appointments, as follows:
Session 1 Waking up in the morning, breakfast and dressing
Session 2 Getting to school and in school
Session 3 Afterschool and bedtime
Session 4 Holidays, relationships and independence
Session 5 So what do we know? Next steps?
The worker then uses what has been understood about Kasey to complete a "So what do we know - Next Steps?" to reflect on what they have learnt and what the joint plan will be.

Learning points for practitioners:

Understanding the child's world is always strengthened by spending time with them in a variety of settings, including the home and with/without their parents whenever possible. Try different ways to engage them, so that they feel heard and listened to. Consider other information known and observations made, check out and reflect on all information received. [Multi-Agency Chronologies](#) should be used routinely as a practice tool in understanding the child/young person and their family's story over time and what is and what is not changing.

Professional judgement, be confident in your practice based upon evidence and professional analysis so that you keep sharing your worries and concerns in the multi-agency group. If you disagree with the decision making, discuss this with your line manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead and refer to the [Pan Bedfordshire Multi Agency Disagreement and Escalation Procedure](#).

Ensure that [Fathers, Male Partners or Carers](#) are a key part of all multi-agency assessments and that risk and resilience factors are known and understood. [offers advice/good practice to improve outcomes for children and young people.](#)

Learning points for managers:

Management Oversight is critical in reviewing progress in children/young people's lives and should prevent drift and delay.

[Prioritise time that is not task-focused to support and enable practitioners to be curious in their thinking about what else might be going on in this family?](#) 'Think family', work together with Adult Social Care to understand adverse childhood experiences on parenting, capacity to change and ability to keep the child safe.

Take the time to..... Spend time getting to know children and their family's history and what life is like for them now. Be professionally curious to consider all possibilities and remember the importance of thinking the unthinkable in your practice, to safeguard children and young people. Read all the historical information about a child and their family you are working with, it will support your practice and thinking about what has changed not changed, the strengths and worries. Practitioners need to maintain an attitude of respectful uncertainty and be truly curious about a child's life. This means applying a critical eye to the information given by the child's carers rather than just accepting things on face value. Does the explanation given make sense? Is there other information which sheds doubt on their account? Is it possible to independently verify the information given? It is important to acknowledge that we all work in an environment of uncertainty. Nobody can see into the future or know what happens behind closed doors and therefore practitioners need to adjust their understanding of the child's situation in order to take into account changing information and different perspectives.

Please access [Pan Bedfordshire Child Protection Procedures](#) & register for updates.