

## Temporary Accommodation Audit

This briefing highlights good practice, key learning, and areas for improvement from an audit of children living in temporary accommodation, with a particular focus on the effectiveness of support and safety planning in respect of the child and their family.

### Good Practice

#### Communication Between Partner Agencies

- There were several examples of good information sharing between partners involved, which made the child's experiences easier to understand.

#### Descriptions of environment

- There were good descriptions of the places children were living whilst in temporary accommodation in their records. Children were seen where they were living by the multi-agency team.

#### LADO referral

- Timely referral to LADO that led to effective risk management evident.

### Key Learning

#### Understanding of Intersecting Risks/Issues

- Children living in temporary accommodation were impacted by multiple risks and vulnerabilities such as domestic abuse, ill parental mental health and substance misuse. Sometimes the focus of intervention focused on the need for permanent housing, rather than the root causes of why children were living in temporary accommodation. These 'adult issues', particularly housing, sometimes got in the way of the child's individual experiences being understood and their 'voice' heard.

#### Safety Planning

- Despite some evidence of some good safety planning, greater consistency is needed to effectively manage the risks. This safety planning process should include housing where children are living in temporary accommodation. In addition, it should stem from an analysis of the risks and support offered.

#### Communication Between Partner Agencies

- Whilst there were several examples of good information sharing between partners involved, in some cases, outcomes of meetings, minutes and subsequent plans were not shared between

partners. This is particularly important for children who are at the heart of a child protection plan.

#### Availability of appropriate housing

- Vulnerable families are moved, often multiple times, across the city, or outside the city, disrupting the support they receive from their wider family and supporting professionals due to a lack of available housing. In some cases, the quality of accommodation was poor. In some circumstances children and families were unable to access local services or maintain links with previous services. Decision making around the allocation of temporary accommodation for families should be based on risk and need.

#### Improving Practice: What we need to do

- Partners need to ensure that where there are housing concerns, **housing are included** (insofar as possible) in planning.
- **Capture the Child's Lived Experience** by talking to them about their day-to-day life and by observing their presentation, behaviour, and relationships. This can tell us what their life is like the impact of living in temporary accommodation. Be mindful that they are likely to live with other issues as well. Ask: What is the impact?
- **Be aware of the impact of parents' needs** (e.g. mental health, domestic abuse, substance misuse) on the care of their children and utilise tools and resources to provide support.
- If vulnerable children and their families are relocated to an area that is not near their local support networks, practitioners should **explore ways in which families can best access the right support and maintain important relationships**.