Social Work Online Team Training (SWOTT) toolkit

Child Welfare Inequalities: Poverty

CASE STUDY: CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Ciaran lives in one of the most deprived wards in an otherwise affluent county. He is 11 years old and started seven months ago as a student at a community college in a more affluent part of Monarshire. Due to Ciaran frequently attending school in visibly dirty uniform, with unbrushed hair and after the development of a persistent cough, a referral was made to children's services early help team. This referral was made with full consent from Ciaran's parents, due to them sharing the school's concerns regarding his persistent cough.

Whilst waiting for the referral to be actioned by the local authority, a Work Coach at a local Job Centre reported to children's services that he had observed bruising on Ciaran's arm. Ciaran had attended the job centre appointment with his stepfather, as there was no one else to care for him at that time. Following a safeguarding conversation with his manager, it was agreed that the Work Coach would share his observations with children's services. The referral made by the job centre was picked up by the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, who have recommended a child and family assessment should take place, under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

When you visit the home, a two-bedroom apartment, it is untidy and you note that Ciaran is sharing a bedroom with his two stepsisters, aged 4 and 7. There are signs of black mould. His mother and stepfather sleep in a second bedroom. His mother does not see the dirty uniform and unbrushed/uncut hair as a problem, as she washes the uniform once a week and can't afford to run the washing machine every time it got dirty. There is a lack of food in the fridge.

Questions

What factors do you need to consider?

How might poverty be affecting this family?

What actions would you take following this home visit?

At the end of the discussion take 5 minutes to complete the critical reflection survey and get a certificate of completion.