## Appendix 2

Professional Curiosity requires the expert communication skills of a practitioner to explore and understand what is happening within a family or for an individual rather than making assumptions or accepting things at face value. Unfortunately it is common for learning reviews to refer to a lack of professional curiosity in cases. Professional curiosity and questioning are fundamental aspects of working together to keep children, young people and adults at risk of harm safe and protected.

Tips for practitioners

 Seek advice, guidance and second opinions

- Work in partnership with other agencies
- Carry out unplanned visits (where appropriate)
- · Plav 'devil's advocate'
- Consider alternative hypotheses
- · Consider cases from the child. young person, adult or another family member's perspective
- · Share your concerns and findings with other professionals/agencies
- For more information on harm visit the Athena ASP page and CP page

Children and Adults rarely disclose abuse and neglect directly to practitioners and, if they do, it will often be through their behaviour or comments. This makes identifying abuse and neglect difficult for professionals across agencies. A lack of professional curiosity can lead to: missed opportunities to identify less obvious indicators of vulnerability or significant harm: assumptions made in assessments which are incorrect and lead to wrong intervention for individuals and families.

What's really happening? Professional curiosity means: testing out your professional hypothesis and not making assumptions: triangulating information from different sources to gain a better understanding of individuals and family functioning: getting an understanding of individuals' and families' past history which in turn, may help you to think about what may happen in the future: having confidence to have the difficult conversations when necessary.

7 Minute Briefing Professional curiosity

Avrshire & Arran

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Professional Curiosity needs practitioners to practice 'respectful uncertainty' – applying critical evaluation to any information they receive and maintaining an open mind. Practitioners will often meet a child, young person, adult or their family when they are in crisis or vulnerable to harm. Research indicates those who experience abuse, including coercion and control want practitioners to ask direct questions and that it is easier to respond to a direct question than offer information independently.

What to ask: Are there direct questions you could ask which will provide more information about the vulnerability of individual family members? E.a. Do vou feel frightened of anvone? Do you feel safe? Check out: Are other professionals involved? Should other professionals be involved but are not? Have other professionals seen the same as you? Are professionals being told the same or different things? Are others concerned? If so, what action has been taken? Learn more here

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**Look**: Is there anything about what you see which prompts questions/makes you feel uneasy? Are you observing any behaviour which is indicative of abuse or neglect? Does what you see support or contradict what you're being told? Listen: Are you being told anything which needs further clarification? Are you concerned about what you hear family members say to each other? Is someone in this family trying to tell you something but is finding it difficult to express themselves?