

The named person approach is unlikely to work

Tracey Jarvis

Whilst understanding why the principles of having a 'named person' seems like a good idea, in terms of making named individuals accountable for ensuring young people's needs are being met, I do not think this will work for a variety of reasons.

Firstly, this is unlikely to be a consistent figure in a child's life as they grow, develop and as their needs change, which leaves questions about who takes over this leading role – who decides and when. Social workers no longer have the luxury of getting to know their clients well; this is a reality and as case managers they would also be the most likely 'named person'. However, the fact is, most social workers are not given the luxury of having time to support families as much as they need; resources and time are needs-led, and crisis or child protection is paramount.

In my role as a residential worker, we are fortunate enough to have the time to work directly with young people and families to get to know their needs, rights and wishes, to build relationships with the individuals and agencies important to them, and to advocate on their behalf. Yet, the 'named person' responsibilities would be unlikely to be placed upon frontline workers. Furthermore, young people are complicated, their problems are multi-dimensional, complex and integrated. School placements, where they live, their doctors, friends, even surnames, change all the time.

Therefore, I believe it would be much better to have as 'named persons' those who are actively involved in the young person's life – whether this is at school, work, as a parent or friend of a young person – to *collectively* name those who are accountable and responsible for the child's wellbeing, growth, learning, safety and development. This shared collective responsibility would aim to reduce the chances of anything being missed.

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