Different Types of Bias

1. Confirmation Bias

We notice information that supports what we already believe and ignore information that contradicts it.

Example: If we think a family is "hard to engage," we may notice every missed appointment but overlook the times they *did* respond.

Why it matters: It can reinforce negative narratives and affect fairness.

2. Anchoring Bias

We rely too heavily on the first piece of information we receive.

Example: If the first note in a child's file says "challenging behaviour," staff may interpret everything through that lens.

Why it matters: First impressions can overshadow current reality.

3. Availability Bias

We assume something is common or likely because it's easy to recall.

Example: If a recent safeguarding case involved a particular risk factor, staff may overestimate how often that risk appears in other families.

Why it matters: It can distort risk assessment.

4. Recency Bias

We give more weight to the most recent event.

Example: A child who had a difficult morning may be labelled "struggling," even if they've had weeks of positive behaviour.

Why it matters: It can skew judgement and record-keeping.

5. Halo/Horns Effect

One positive trait makes us view everything positively (halo). One negative trait makes us view everything negatively (horns).

Example: A child who is academically strong may be seen as "well-behaved" even when they're not. A child who struggles socially may be judged more harshly.

Why it matters: It affects expectations and opportunities.

6. Status Quo Bias

We prefer things to stay the same because change feels risky.

Example: Teams may stick to outdated processes because “that’s how we’ve always done it.”

Why it matters: It can block improvement and innovation.

7. Attribution Bias

We explain *our own* behaviour by circumstances but explain *others’* behaviour by personality.

Example: “I was late because of traffic.” “They were late because they’re disorganised.”

Why it matters: It affects empathy and relationships.