

Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review Summary

Child B and siblings



Child B and Siblings

1. The Review (LCSPR)

Was commissioned by Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Partnership to consider the multi-agency responses to Child B, who was involved in a near fatal incident of medicine ingestion. The review also considered harm to Child B's younger siblings after substances were identified in them.

2. Understanding the family

The family is White British. At the time of the incident, Child B, aged five, was awaiting a formal diagnosis of autism. He lived with his younger siblings and their parents; all the children have additional developmental, communication, and health needs. The family was open to universal and community services and had lived in Stoke-on-Trent for over three years. Child B, as an unborn baby, was subject to a Protection Plan in a neighbouring authority. Historical concerns related to mother's long-term drug use, associated lifestyle, compromised parenting, and mental health difficulties. Mother's five elder children (now adults) were not in her care. Assessments for unborn Child B showed positive changes and included a new partner who had a learning disability.

Two periods of early help occurred in Stoke-on-Trent and the Early Years Forum ¹ then oversaw the children's needs, supported by community and hospital health and education services. Family engagement with services to meet the children's needs was poor, although there was good engagement with early help services, which provided extensive practical help and developed positive relationships.



3. Practice themes to make a difference

The review reflected on key themes that helped the Partnership understand what had happened and what this meant for the infants involved. This meant for practice

The importance of knowing parental /carer history and appreciating the significance of predisposing vulnerabilities and risks.

Having a shared understanding of neglect and appreciating what it was like to be a child in this family.

Adult issues and children's needs critical thinking about adult behaviours, capacity, and needs. Adopting a child-centred approach within a whole family focus to help thinking and understanding about adult behaviours.

The patterning of information analysing patterns of engagement and attendance.

Critical thinking and challenge across the multi-agency system.

Information seeking and sharing ensuring effective systems are in place and information is not seen in isolation.

4. Key Learning

- 1 Knowing the history and understanding predisposing vulnerabilities and risks.
- 2 The impact of adult issues on parenting and assessment of support needs.
- 3 Consideration of the impact of adult medication on parenting.
- 4 Recognising and understanding neglect across universal and early help services.
- 5 Ensuring information-sharing and recording systems are clear and inform threshold decisions.
- 6 Patterns of attendance for health and education provision, the impact on the child(ren) and the systems in place to identify these.
- 7 Systems to support the coordination of services, support, and information across universal services for children with additional needs.
- 8 Holding the child at the centre of practice and systems and understanding their lived experience.

¹ The Early years Forum is a 'multi-agency meeting that monitors whether the right services are involved to support pre-school children showing special educational needs and/or disabilities.' Stoke-on-Trent Early years forum - [Staffordshire County Council](#)

5. Recommendations for the Partnership include

- Evaluating and strengthening the effectiveness of understanding about Neglect.
- Strengthening practice skills to support critical thinking and challenge within and across services.
- Seek assurance that information sharing and seeking in the CHAD² involves triangulating historical information to support threshold decisions, including cases open to early help.
- Promote awareness and understanding of the Safeguarding the unborn baby procedures.
- Strengthen systems and practice in the multi-disciplinary Early Years Forum.
- Ensure services that support /come into contact with adults who are parents follow a 'whole family' approach.

6. What can you do

- 1 Recognise the importance of knowing and understanding parental history, experiences, and circumstances and using evidence-based tools and approaches to help assess parenting capacity.
- 2 Strengthen your knowledge and skills in recognising and understanding neglect and how this can present, especially for children with additional needs. Develop confidence using evidence-based tools to support assessment, analysis, and intervention.
- 3 Appreciate the lived experience of infants and children, especially when they have disabilities and cannot verbally communicate what life is like for them.
- 4 Understand your responsibilities in seeking and sharing information and its critical importance in understanding what is happening within a family.
- 5 Consider and reflect on the co-existence of adult issues, what the adults may need to help their children thrive, and the likely impact on parenting and children's needs.

- 6 Strengthen your knowledge and understanding of the procedures for safeguarding the unborn baby.
- 7 Collaborate with adult service colleagues who have the knowledge and skills to support adults with complex needs, and support risk assessment and safety planning.
- 8 Use critical thinking and respectful challenge in interactions with parents/carers, in supervision and through multi-agency discussions to challenge assumptions, biases, and attitudes, support curiosity, and facilitate reflection.
- 9 Access training, resources, and tools to evidence what helps and to reflect on and improve your own practice, skills, and knowledge. It's okay to ask for support and help in navigating the complexities of working with vulnerable adults, infants, and children.
- 10 Read and reflect on knowledge from learning reviews locally and nationally to support practice.

7. Access to the Report



There is a Learning Briefing: **What do you need to know?** Associated with this review, [READ HERE](#) [READ](#) the full Report [HERE](#)