

Child CA Serious Case Review Practitioner Briefing

Child CA sadly died from medical causes at the age of just three months. A Child Protection plan under the categories of neglect and emotional abuse had been in place throughout Child CA's short life and there had been considerable intervention by Children's Social Care in the family historically. The initial response to the family was not as timely as would be expected, however interventions in the months prior to Child CA's death were found to be in accordance with expected practice.

The recently completed Serious Case Review has concluded that the death was not predictable or preventable and that that was nothing either agencies or individual practitioners could have done to alter the outcome. Equally, no blame has been attached to the parents. The following learning points are of particular relevance to practitioners:

Escalation

A timely referral was made to Children's Social Care once the pregnancy was known. However, the ensuing assessment and Initial Child Protection Conference were considerably delayed. This resulted in plans not being in place at the time of Child CA's premature birth.

During this period a number of agencies continued to work with Child CA's family, however none escalated their concerns about delays in the process. BSCB has an agreed multi-agency [escalation procedure](#) that should be used by all professionals to raise concerns in similar circumstances. Explicit reference to having used this process should be made within case records.

Pre-Birth Protocol

The [Multi-Agency Pre-Birth Protocol](#) sets out expected actions for all agencies when safeguarding concerns are identified prior to birth. It provides examples of risk factors (including for concealed and denied pregnancies) and the expected timeframes for actions during pregnancy and post-birth.

Compliance with the protocol ensures that assessments and conferences are routinely completed prior to birth, enabling effective action to be taken to safeguard new born babies. While we cannot know whether the delays in process would have changed outcomes for Child CA, it is evident that options were reduced by the late Initial Child Protection Conference.

Proportionate Assessments

There was a considerable history of Children's Social Care intervention in Child CA's family and a number of siblings had previously been taken into care. However, the Child and Family Assessment primarily concentrated on the family's current circumstances rather than considering the risk factors that had led to older children being taken into care.

All assessments should be proportionate to their purpose and, in these circumstances, a review of the historical records would have been sufficient to confirm that an Initial Child Protection Conference was warranted, without the need for a more lengthy assessment period.

Child Protection Plans

Child CA was made subject to a Child Protection Plan a day after being born. However, the review concluded that the actions were not SMART in that they lacked detail, individuals responsible for actions were not named and there were no timeframes. Neither was it evident that the plan addressed the risk factors that had been identified in the Child Protection Conference.

Children's Services have already rolled out the Risk Sensible model which will ensure that Child Protection plans contain fewer, SMART actions that explicitly address the risk factors that have made the plan necessary. Training is available to all professionals through the [BSCB training programme](#).

Read the full Child CA SCR report [here](#).