

**Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership
Child CD Serious Case Review Practitioner Briefing**

This serious case review was triggered by Child CD's tragic death at the age of 13 months. Child CD was put to bed in an unsafe sleeping environment and suffocated in a toy box as a result. Child CD was the younger of two siblings and, for the most part, the two children were parented positively, were well presented and met their developmental milestones. There were times however, when mum struggled to maintain her emotional wellbeing, while her relationship with Child CD's dad had its difficulties.

The review considers support for vulnerable adolescents (with reference to mum); the role of all agencies in sharing concerns and providing co-ordinated early help to families as soon as there are signs that they are struggling; the need to see the children and share information when dealing with malicious and anonymous allegations; how agencies respond to young men with childcare responsibilities, but who are not in the family home; and safer sleep guidance for older babies and toddlers.

Safer Sleep

Child CD was put to bed in a adapted cot-bed. This allowed her to manoeuvre out of the bed and tragically become trapped in a toy box. [Safer sleep advice](#) for practitioners covers children up to the age of five, not just babies, and includes an assessment tool to be completed with parents. Everyone working with a child or family can play their part in promoting these messages, checking sleeping arrangements and contribute to reducing the risk of children dying in similar situations.

Early Help

There were a number of concerns for Child CD during the time period covered by the review and there were times when mum received services above and beyond the universal offer. There were also missed opportunities for practitioners to come together, with mum's consent, share information and produce an early help assessment and plan to support her. This would have enabled practitioners to walk alongside mum, build on her strengths and understand her struggles. Practitioners who already know a family are best placed to provide early help and are most likely to be able to positively engage them. The framework for this, together with sources of support are set out in [Working Well with Children and Families in Lancashire](#).

Good Practice

The review identified a number of good practice points including:

- ⇒ Mum's general practitioner proactively contacted her a number of times to check on her wellbeing following the birth of Child CD's sibling and, again, later in the review period when she did not attend for planned consultations;
- ⇒ Child CD's dad was positively supported by local authority housing services and a local charity, who were persistent in the support that they offered, despite the difficulties that dad faced;
- ⇒ Mum received effective and co-ordinated multi-disciplinary health support during her pregnancy and after the birth of Child CD's older sibling. She formed positive trusted relationships with practitioners and was able to achieve stability in her mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- ⇒ The children's centre were child focussed, knew and understood the family.

Working with Dads

There were two distinct groups of agencies in this review: those working with Child CD and mum, and those working with dad. Those working with mum were unaware of dad's sporadic involvement with Child CD, having initially recorded that he was not part of their life. This highlights the need for an ongoing inquisitive approach to ensure that changes in a family's circumstances are spotted and all sources of support and concern are identified. Young men will often care for their own or others' children, however the housing agencies working with dad did not enquire whether he was doing so. Had they done, they could have linked to agencies supporting mum to create a stronger team around the family to be formed and safeguarding risks identified.

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

Access more safer sleep guidance and materials [here](#)