

Child LT Serious Case Review (SCR) Learning Brief

The review was triggered by Child LT's presentation at hospital with injuries consistent with having been severely shaken and from impact with a hard surface. At the time of the incident Child LT was three months old and lived with both parents and a two year old sibling. Father was originally from south Asia, his English was limited. He experienced flashbacks and nightmares following an accident at work that left him with a disability which in turn impacted on his life leading to financial hardship and depression. He also experienced low moods, auditory hallucinations and could also be aggressive to practitioners. Mother was also from south Asia and spoke Farsi, having no English. Mum's particular dialects also caused difficulties for translators. The family had ongoing issues with their housing and neighbours and were being supported to resolve these. Father's mental health deteriorated following Child LT's birth and he overdosed with prescription medication, discharging himself from hospital two days later. Mother disclosed physical abuse by father to midwifery, but declined any additional support. The family were weighted as universal plus by services. The report identified learning and made recommendations in the following areas:

Impact of father's mental health on his parenting

- The impact of father's mental health on his parenting was hardly considered or explored by mental health services, despite him disclosing that his symptoms were exacerbated by noise made by Child LT's sibling.
- There was no evidence of consideration of the risk of domestic violence and abuse to mother.
- Mental health services considered contacting the health visitor about the impact of father's mental health on his parenting on one occasion, but there was no indication that the proposed contact was followed through.
- Most parents who experience mental ill health do not abuse or neglect their children.
- The risks to children from parental mental health greater when other factors such as financial hardship, poor housing, discrimination, domestic violence and abuse and lack of social support also present.
- There was an absence of a 'Think Family' approach by adult mental health services and the GP practice.

Good Practice

- The midwife made a referral to the Police Diversity Unit after father disclosed ongoing racial abuse from a neighbour.
- When the GP referred mother to midwifery when her pregnancy with Child LT was confirmed, the referral included details of father's mental health concerns.
- Midwifery referred mother for enhanced support as a result of father's history of 'severe depression and psychosis' cited in the GP referral

Interpreting Services

- Inconsistent access to interpreters at health appointments compromised the ability to professionals to complete assessments and safeguard the children.
- This was a particular issue for hospital staff responding to dad's overdose.
- Using father as an interpreter for mother increased her dependence on him and almost certainly prevented her from disclosing domestic abuse.
- A number of earlier SCR's have drawn attention to how a lack of professional interpreters prevented professionals from fully understanding the risks to children who were seriously harmed or worse.

Response to Domestic Abuse disclosures.

- Mother disclosed domestic violence to the community midwife a month after the birth of Child LT. With the support of the health visitor a safety plan was developed but was not informed by a DASH risk assessment.

Abusive Head Trauma

- The accessibility of advice on how to manage episodes of prolonged crying to parents for whom English is not a first language is an issue.
- Practitioners need to consider providing advice through interpreters.
- Adult facing mental health professionals working with adults with children should be sufficiently well informed to communicate advice on handling prolonged crying.
- The ICON campaign, launched by the safeguarding partners and CDOP, aims to help parents and carers cope with a crying baby and can be found [here](#)
- The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel have undertaken a national review into babies seriously harmed or killed by their father or male carer that can be found [here](#)