



## Learning Lessons Briefing

### “Oscar”

**Methodology:** Multi-agency tabletop rapid review meeting

**Practitioner Involvement:** Practitioner records and notes were reviewed prior to the meeting

**KLOE's:**

- Was Oscar's lived experience understood by professionals?
- Was the risk to his well-being fully recognised by agencies?
- Were there any barriers to information sharing?
- What changes can be made to practice that will improve the protection of children and young people?

**Scoping Period for the review:** January 2024 – January 2025

### The Review

**Background Summary:** In early 2025, 5-year-old Oscar was left in the care of his Godparents while Mum and her partner went shopping. When they returned to the home of the Godparents in the late evening, both were intoxicated, both had blood on their bodies and clothes and Mum had a nosebleed. CCTV footage shows them arguing outside a pub prior to returning to the address, and her partner is seen to punch Mum resulting in her losing consciousness.

Upon returning to the house an argument took place between the men, during which Oscar's Godfather was assaulted by Mum's partner. Mum and her partner left the address, leaving Oscar with his Godparents, his Godfather remaining unconscious on the floor.

Paramedics were called to the house at about 2am, finding Godfather deceased and Oscar sitting next to his body, his clothing stained with blood. It is not known to what extent Oscar had been exposed to the events of that night.

Oscar and his family had been known to agencies since infancy with concerns about neglect and emotional abuse identified. Mum was known to have mental health difficulties, domestic abuse within relationships and alcohol and substance misuse.

### Learning:

- The child's lived experiences and needs are fully documented at every contact
- Trauma informed approaches are used to engage hard-to-reach, vulnerable families
- Use of the escalation policy is considered when engagement does not occur
- The lived experience of all family members, proportionate to involvement with the service, is understood
- The impact of parental mental health / substance misuse concerns on parenting ability is considered at every contact and the thresholds for escalation considered

### Recommendations:

- **Voice and Life of the Child:** Ensuring the child's experiences and needs are understood and prioritised
- **Engagement with Vulnerable Families:** Developing alternative methods to engage hard-to-reach families effectively
- **Record Keeping/Documentation:** Emphasising the importance of thorough and accurate documentation, especially when professionals leave the service
- **Cumulative Harm and Trauma:** Recognising and addressing the impact of generational trauma on children and families
- **Escalation with non-engagement:** Escalating cases quickly when families are not engaging, ensuring that children are seen, and multi-agency meetings are held

### How can you make a difference?

Key messages from the learning to ask yourself for your practice are:

- *Can I make changes to improve my own practice?*
- *Do I need to seek further support, training, or supervision?*