



Learning Lessons Briefing - Serious Case Review In respect of Child F

Background

At the time of his death Child F and his family were known to a range of services in Wolverhampton. At the age of two weeks Child F suffered a serious head injury, together with multiple fractures. All of which were extremely suspicious and indicative of an abusive assault by an adult. Child F died because of these injuries. Child F's Father has been found guilty of murder for which he is receiving a custodial sentence.

A Serious Case Review has been undertaken to provide insight into the work of individuals and the way that organisations worked together to identify and share learning.

Please go to www.wolverhamptonsafeguarding.org.uk for the full overview report and associated Action Plan.

This briefing outlines the key themes identified with the review process to inform how changes can be made within professional practice across all organisations to ensure effective safeguarding for the children of Wolverhampton.

Learning Themes and what this means for Professional Practice

Theme 1 – Co-ordinated Sharing of Information

There were several professionals from a range of organisations working with this family. However, information sharing was not co-ordinated or effective. The early help assessment framework and ‘team around the family’ approach was not used but should have been.

What does this mean for professional practice?

- **Systems and procedures** that exist to support practitioners in working with families must be **applied**
- Be **confident** to use all available mechanisms **to share information**
- Display **professional curiosity** and **talk** to other professionals / agencies also working with the child / family
- Always consider **who might need to know what I know**

Theme 2 – Recognising all aspects of Risk

The family were displaying avoidant behaviour and disguised compliance and, thus, were difficult to consistently engage. Had this been collectively acknowledged by all professionals and agencies additional, wider risk factors may have been identified and recognised.

What does this mean for professional practice?

- **Avoid** reliance on **self-reporting**
- **Be** professionally **curious**
- **Triangulate** and **check things out** by talking to others
- **Access** the appropriate **training** to inform your practice

Theme 3 – The importance of a good assessment

The pre – birth assessment relied on self-reporting; did not take account of family history; did not take account of information from other agencies; and did not sufficiently explore the birth father.

What does this mean for professional practice?

- Always **analyse** the current risk/need/child and family circumstances in the **context of their history**
- **Identify fathers** and challenge if this information is not supplied
- Identify and **consider all** other **significant adults** and **relationships**
- Maintain focus on the **original concern**
- Complete **assessments** within timescale
- **Seek information** from all relevant sources
- Use **guidance** and **assessment tools**

Theme 4 – The need for quality management/case oversight and supervision

There was delayed and very limited management oversight of the social care assessment and subsequent decision making. There were missed opportunities to escalate concerns around the lack of progress and decisions made by agencies.

What does this mean for professional practice?

- **Use** available **peer review** and **supervision** frameworks
- Understand and be confident to **use WSCB escalation procedures**
- Where required **statutory assessments** are scrutinised and **signed off in timescale**

Theme 5 – Fathers

The family sought to be deliberately vague about Child F's Father.

What does this mean for professional practice?

- Always use all available professional and family networks to **identify fathers**
- Always use all available professional and family networks to **identify other significant adults and relationships**
- **Challenge** why a family is reluctant to share this information
- **Record** attempts to identify fathers and significant others