



LSCB Learning briefing

CHILD O Serious Case Review March 2016

Welcome to this Child O Serious Case Review Learning Briefing published by Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board. The full review report is available at this link:

<http://www.lancshiresafeguarding.org.uk/media/13787/lscb-child-o-overview-report-with-foreword-march-2016.pdf>

Background

This was a review which encompassed five LSCBs, as the mother and child had been moving around all the authorities. It is possible to speculate on the mother's motivation for all the moves, but we do not know it. It is likely that the moves were prompted by the fear of being found by either the child's father or the authorities. In August 2014, the mother killed Child O and then herself. It was a tragic and highly unusual incident. At the time of death, Child O was 22 months old.

The court process related to father's application for contact with Child O. Mother had removed herself and Child O from cohabiting with father when Child O was a tiny baby. Whilst the couple were together, she had made one allegation of domestic abuse (recorded by Police as 'domestic dispute'). Police had attended and recorded a verbal argument. Once she had left, she stayed hidden from all agencies, moving around the country. Later, after the separation she made other serious allegations, but had been unable to offer any evidence when the Police investigated.

The family thus had very limited involvement with professionals. The only agency involved at the time of Child O's death was Cafcass.

There were a small number of findings which required a response.

Broadly the issues identified were:

Working with fathers:

The importance of working proactively with fathers was emphasised. It is possible that assumptions regarding the role of fathers affected professionals in this case.

Practice questions: *Have I made assumptions about the role of fathers? Have I heard the views of fathers?*

Ensuring that the impact on children is taken into account in assessment and decision-making:

It appeared that the child was lost in the parental dispute and that decisions did not sufficiently consider the outcomes for the child.

Practice questions: *Do I know what a day in the life of this child is like? Have I considered the impact on this child of my decisions?*

Dealing with allegations of domestic abuse:

In this case, the mother told professionals of increasing levels of domestic abuse, describing abuse of increasing severity as time went on. However, there are significant concerns that this was untrue.

Practice questions: *How do we make sure we respond appropriately to allegations of domestic abuse? Do we ever question whether domestic abuse allegations are true?*

Homicide in the context of parental conflict:

This is an issue which is the subject of new research.

Practice questions: *do we know the research on homicide in the context of parental conflict? Are we aware of the warning signs?*

For further information please refer to

1. LSCB safeguarding procedures
<http://panlancashirescb.proceduresonline.com/index.htm>
2. Domestic violence and abuse: how health services, social care and the organisations they work with can respond effectively
<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph50>

Finding Out More about Serious Case Reviews:

Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board continues to run Briefing Sessions about the findings from Serious Case Reviews and they are updated on a regular basis. There will be more about the learning from Serious Case Reviews completed in Lancashire and helpful practical advice to take back into your practice. Check the LSCB website for upcoming dates.

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