

Ted Child Safeguarding Practice Review 6 Step Briefing

Overview

In March 2022, the Southampton Safeguarding Children Partnership commissioned a Child Safeguarding Practice Review which considered professional involvement with a child called 'Ted'.

The one-year-old child was subject to a child protection plan when he sustained injuries that are thought to be non-accidental (criminal investigation ongoing).

The review was conducted by an independent lead reviewer with the intention of identifying learning about the way that agencies work together to safeguard children in Southampton.

Background

Ted lived with his father who was a single carer. The family had moved to Southampton from a neighbouring authority when Ted was a few months old. Initially homeless and sofa surfing, they were placed into temporary accommodation. Ted's father had inconsistent family support locally.

Prior to the move to Southampton, Ted had been on a child in need plan due to concerns about the impact on Ted of both parent's vulnerabilities. Following the move, early help support was provided and as concerns increased regarding how Ted's father was managing, a child protection plan was made.

Contextual factors included Ted's significant emerging health needs which required involvement from multiple professionals, and father's history of mental and physical health issues, including substance misuse, whilst also being a care leaver from another local authority.

Key Learning Points

- The importance of knowing and understanding the impact of a parent's vulnerabilities and history on their parenting
- The impact of parental substance misuse, mental health, and prescribed pain medication
- Complexities when working with homeless families
- Exploring and understanding a child's likely and actual lived experience
- Considering absent parents, even when domestic abuse is alleged
- Considering what support is required to ensure a lone, non-birthing, parent acquires 'Parental Responsibility'
- The need for effective referral and transfers of child in need plans across local authority borders
- Emotional support for parents of children with complex and lifelong conditions
- The need to consider if the parent requires an assessment or support due to their own needs or as a care leaver
- The need for a clear plan and timely, focused, multi-agency work with a family following a decision to instigate a child protection plan

Questions for professionals to consider

- Does the care giver have a history of trauma and how might this impact the child/ children?
- Does the parent themselves have needs which require support from agencies – if so, who?
- Has the HIPS policy on children moving across local authority areas been consulted if the child is moving from out of area?
- Has information from all agencies been considered, including out of area information?
- Have I considered the impact of prescribed medication on parenting and sought expert opinion on this if required?
- If there is a concern around self-harm or suicide, have I taken proactive and appropriate action?
- Have I recorded and included the child's other parent in the process – if not, why not?
- Does this case require a referral to housing support?
- If there is a concerning event involving a child who is already subject to a child protection plan, has holding a strategy meeting/ undertaking a S47 investigation been considered?
- Do I know who has parental responsibility for the child?
- Does the parent need assistance with multiple medical appointments?
- Do I need to discuss domestic abuse with the parent and know how to signpost/obtain appropriate support?
- Do I need to complete a further safeguarding referral because of any new information shared?

Review recommendations

1. The SSCP to propose that the HIPS protocol for protecting children who move across local authority borders is reissued and widely promoted across the HIPS partnership areas to encourage improved cross border working with vulnerable families
2. That the learning from this review is shared with the Southampton Safeguarding Adult Partnership
3. That the SSCP seeks assurance from the relevant partner agencies about the quality of core groups, to include timeliness and the attendance of professionals and family members
4. The SSCP to request that agencies review their practice in respect of ensuring that the person caring for a child has PR and provide feedback on what recent progress has been made
5. The Southampton MASH/CRS to be asked to consider their expectations and processes regarding transfers from other Local Authorities in respect of children subject to a Child in Need plan
6. The SSCP to consider how it can promote
 - the responsibilities of partner agencies to care leavers
 - the responsibility to make adult safeguarding referrals and/or a referral for a Care Act assessment when a parent is an adult with care and support needs
 - trauma informed practice with children and their parents
 - responses to men who allege they are victims of domestic abuse
 - what non-mental health professionals need to do when they are aware of a significant suicide situation
7. The SSCP to ask its partner agencies to consider how they can ensure that non-medical professionals understand that 'health' services consist of many agencies who do not necessarily have access to information from other areas of 'health'

Useful links for Best Practice

- [HIPS protocol for protecting children who move across local authority borders](#)
- ["The Myth of Invisible Men": Safeguarding children under 1 from non-accidental injury caused by male carers](#)
- [National review into the murders of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson – recommendations and findings for national government and local safeguarding partners to protect children at risk of serious harm](#)