

Child J

Background

The Isle of Man Safeguarding Board after being notified by the Isle of Man Constabulary, commissioned a Serious Case Management Review (SCMR) in respect of an adolescent child who is referred to as Child J. Reports from the agencies involved with Child J were requested and received. An independent and experienced safeguarding review author Dr Russell Wate was appointed by the SCMR sub- group.

The purpose of the SCMR was to reflect on the individual circumstances of Child J and look at the current resources, systems and arrangements that are in place and need improving to address such situations in the future.

Child J lived a complicated, chaotic and emotionally complex life and had been the subject of child safeguarding procedures periodically for over six years starting when they were seven. They were subject to the emotional impact of their father's criminal conviction, domestic abuse, family dynamics, extended private law proceedings and poor engagement with services trying to help them and their family. Child J became involved in drugs and other criminality and had dangerous criminal associations. Child J was deemed as "beyond parental control", was regularly missing from home and was becoming increasingly more violent. Matters came to a head when they overdosed and were admitted to hospital and transferred to Intensive Care. As they recovered, they assaulted care staff and police officers and subsequently was remanded into the care of the department and subsequently in a secure unit.

Key Learning

- Understanding and recognising a child's adverse childhood experiences (ACE).
- Realising the impact of ACEs and how they can make a child more vulnerable to exploitation.
- The importance of multi-agency working and information sharing.
- Improvement in understanding and delivering Contextual Safeguarding.

Improving Practice

- The IoM Safeguarding Board should establish with partners a multi-agency strategy and procedural framework for contextualised safeguarding and exploitation. This should include a review of the current information sharing protocol.
- The IoM Safeguarding Board should consider adopting a vulnerable adolescent service strategy.
- The IoM Safeguarding Board should seek assurance from partners that an early help strategy is being considered and developed to intervene early in the lives of children similar to Child J. This early help strategy should include a professional framework to improve professional's knowledge and understanding of the impact of adverse childhood experiences implement that understanding in response to children and young people; and for professionals to provide a trauma informed response

- The IoM Safeguarding Board should ensure that learning is provided that highlights to professionals the importance of identifying and acting on a 'reachable moment' for a child at risk of CCE. This should include assurance from the safeguarding strategic partners that they have systems and structures in place through them working as a multi-agency team with joint responsibility to be able to capitalise on this moment.
- The IoM Safeguarding Board should support the implementation of the proposed standard operating procedure for a 'Child presenting to ED with a Mental Health Crisis Out of Hours'. This would help to ensure there is in place actions to deal with similar situations in the future.
- The Hospital should consider the allocation of a room to be used for similar circumstances in the future.
- Alternative security arrangements should be considered for putting in place rather than the use of police officers.
- The Police need to consider the use of de-escalation and conflict resolution training for all officers.

Next Steps – What you can do

- Understand ACEs and use a trauma informed approach to work through them when safeguarding.
- Embed trauma-informed and restorative practices that will promote early intervention and prevention across all public services within the Isle of Man
- Look out for and act on "reachable moments" in children's lives.
- Use a Contextual Safeguarding approach.