

Learning Briefing

Child A – Rapid Review

What is a Rapid Review?

A new Rapid Review methodology is being piloted in relation to children and young people who are believed to have suffered serious abuse or harm, in order to ensure a more in-depth and timely review of agencies involvement or actions.

This new approach allows more detailed analysis and proportionate consideration about whether the criteria for a Serious Case Management Review (SCMR) are met, in particular whether a SCMR will “contribute significantly to learning and an improvement in safeguarding practice”.

It also facilitates more timely sharing of immediate learning to improve practice, to strengthen safeguarding practice locally and improve multi-agency working; to ensure agencies better safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

Background

This Rapid Review considered the circumstances of a young teenager, who died. The review highlighted that her lived experience was not sufficiently understood and her voice was missing during contacts with the family. The history of the family was not known by all agencies and there was no evidence of a “Think Family” approach or sufficient professional curiosity.

Key Learning from the Rapid Review

The following key areas of learning were identified and are split into recurrent learning, that is learning that has been identified in previous SCMRs and through independent scrutiny, and new learning that also requires robust action to ensure improved practice.

Recurrent Learning

- The need for an improved understanding of consent and when this can be dispensed with where safeguarding concerns are evident.
- The need for all information to be shared across agencies especially family history, through comprehensive chronologies to promote the welfare and safeguarding of the child.
- The need to “Think Family” in relation to parental adversities and their impact on parenting and safety for children.
- The need to improve the recognition and assessment of Neglect.
- The need to improve the response to exploitation especially online exploitation and ensure that robust processes are in place to undertake assessments, safety plans and supports to reduce harms.
- The need to collate and reflect the child’s voice and lived experience in all contacts, referrals and assessments.
- The need for greater professional curiosity, asking more searching questions that go beyond the adults or parent’s narrative.

Actions Being Taken to Address Recurrent Learning

Work is already ongoing across Board agencies to address the areas of learning, again highlighted by this review. The following provides brief detail of that improvement work:

- The Board has revised the Safeguarding Act 2018 to strengthen the duty to share information for the purpose of promoting the welfare or safeguarding children or vulnerable adults. Following Royal Assent, regulations and additional guidance will be provided to strengthen practice.
- New Consent Guidance is in place and has been rolled out to professionals across all sectors, through facilitated sessions and testing of impact on practice is planned.
- The Children's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) provides an opportunity for improved information sharing. Health Safeguarding can now access necessary records across the health sector.
- A new Framework and toolkit is being developed to improve the recognition, assessment and intervention in respect of neglect and will include the use of tools that focus on understanding a child's lived experience.
- Substantial work is ongoing to improve practice in relation to exploitation through the implementation of a new Risk Outside the Home (ROTH) Process, Protocols and Tools.
- Work to improve a multi-agency Think Family approach in relation to parental vulnerabilities is planned following a recent SCMR.
- Chronologies that detail family history and significant concerns are being used in some agencies, and further work to develop this across all agencies is being planned.
- Professional Curiosity training has been rolled out across the partnership and is a feature of the multi-agency core offer; further guidance is planned, including engagement with practitioners through the new Practitioner Forums.

New Learning

The following new learning was identified during the Rapid Review:

1. The need for clarity in the MASH about different processes, especially when a strategy meeting is required.
2. The necessity of sharing the outcomes of contacts and referrals with all relevant agencies and professionals.
3. To ensure that all relevant agencies are invited to Strategy Meetings and that information is shared and outcomes recorded and shared, to ensure appropriate safeguarding action.
4. The responsibility for follow up by all professionals and agencies if no response/outcome is received in respect of their referral (MARF).
5. The importance of considering the risks for all children in the family in respect of any child or family's members disclosures or actions and recording involvement, incidents and referrals on all children's records.
6. It is essential to ensure that all family members are properly linked in records to identify safeguarding implications for siblings, especially those who do not live together.
7. The importance of action when a child is not brought to appointments, by marking a child as "was not brought" rather than did not attend and using the "Was Not Brought Policy" to ensure follow up with the family is made. Specific work is required with CAMHS to raise awareness and understanding in relation to the Was Not Brought Policy and effective safeguarding practice.
8. How professionals work with families who are reluctant to engage to ensure children's needs are met.
9. Action plans to address the key findings and ensure practice improvements have been developed by the Board and further communication will be forthcoming from the partnership stemming from this review, as necessary.

Taking the Learning into your Practice:

It is important to take the issues raised in this Rapid Review into your supervision, team meeting and group supervision.

Consider the following:

1. Am I evidencing a Think Family approach in my practice? In particular, recognising the importance of sharing and seeking information about a parent's vulnerabilities and their earlier life experiences, which may have implications for their care of all their children?
2. Where parental vulnerabilities exist, do I always consider the need for Early Help and support or safeguarding referrals for those children and their families? If consent is not given, am I aware this may be a child protection issue?
3. Am I confident with my duty to share information for safeguarding and welfare concerns; and know where to get further support and advice?
4. Am I using a detailed chronology to assist with my understanding of the child's history and can identify significant concerns that will inform my intervention with the child and family?
5. Have I ensured that my assessment and intervention with the child and family clearly reflects the child's voice and lived experience?
6. When undertaking work with the family, am I asking searching questions that go beyond the narrative given by parents and other adults, as well as seeking information from other agencies?
7. Am I aware of the indicators of child neglect and do I have enough knowledge of how to assess the risk to and impact on children and their global development when undertaking assessments?
8. Am I familiar with MASH processes when making a referral into Children & Families and would I follow up the referral if I haven't received notification of the outcome?
9. Do I understand when to use the 'Was Not Brought' policy and confident in following the process as an effective safeguarding measure?