



Child B Serious Case Review

Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board.

What happened?

Child B died on 3rd July 2014 in Sandwell. At the time of death, they were the subject of a child protection plan on the grounds of neglect attributable mainly to concerns about mother's alcohol misuse in a neighbouring authority. Following their death, Child B was the subject of a post-mortem examination which noted that while the cause of death was unascertained, there were concerns that Child B had died while co-sleeping with mother and maternal grandmother, both of whom were believed to be under the influence of alcohol.

What did it tell us?

- The Review finds that there was a persistent failure to recognise risk.
- There was a tendency to parent-centred practice. Mum was described as pleasant, intelligent and articulate. She was believed to have insight into her difficulties and

appeared to be help-seeking and keen to overcome problems. In reality she did not engage with any agency in any meaningful way throughout the period of the review. As a consequence, she never changed and her children's circumstances never changed.

- Poor inter-agency communication. The agencies that were involved with Mum all had information that was relevant to the safeguarding process and the failure to share this information may have impacted adversely on the outcomes for Child B and her siblings.
- There was a failure to take into account the voice of the child. Even though there are reports of children expressing their concerns and wishes to professionals, these were not taken seriously.
- Recognition of the impact of neglect. Allegations of neglect were made 2 years prior to the death of this child. Support offered did not address this neglect but instead focused on the needs of adults.

What can we do now?

What method does your agency apply to ensure accurate assessment of risk?

Are you aware of your information sharing protocols, including cross border and how do you apply them?

How are the voices of children who experience parental substance misuse abuse and neglect actively heard and responded to?

How confident are you in challenging parents when conflicting evidence is available?

The full report is available at www.staffscb.org.uk

If in doubt ask for advice from your manager, safeguarding lead or Sandwell Safeguarding Business Unit on 0121 569 4800