



**Dudley Safeguarding
People Partnership**

**Child T
Serious Case Review
Practitioner Briefing
October 2020**



WHO SHOULD READ THE SCR?

Any practitioner and manager whose work brings them into contact with children, young people and their families. The messages are just as important for those working in adult services (where service users are parents or carers). The term 'children' includes children and young people up to 18 years of age. For further information on SCR's/CSPR/s visit the Dudley safeguarding website



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Child T was living with his mother and her new partner since June 2019. His older siblings initially lived in the house but chose to move to their grandparents over the summer as they didn't like mother's new partner. Child T continued to have weekly contact with his father and paternal grandparents.

Concerns were raised that T's school attendance had declined and when school tried to investigate the child's mother was initially co-operative, but her partner intimidated staff. Early Help services also tried to undertake an assessment but mother's partner tore up mother's consent. Children's services were also met with resistance.

In October, a visit was made to the home by West Midlands Police to undertake a Clare's Law "right to know" visit. During this meeting the previous history of offending was discussed including a risk assessment made by probation from June 2019 when probation involvement ended. The risk assessment specified that S posed a very high risk of harm to a known adult and a medium risk of harm to children. Child's T's mother was asked in front of S if she knew about this risk assessment and S's previous offending. She replied that she had but it later transpired that she had not and was therefore unaware of the previous convictions. She later stated that she had been coerced by S into that she was fully aware of his history.

In the early hours on a day in December, Child T's mother escaped from the house having been physically assaulted, Child T had been injured as he tried to protect his mother.



FURTHER CONCERNS IDENTIFIED

Following the last incident Child T's mother disclosed a six month history of repeated physical abuse, sexual abuse and sustained coercive control which included financial control, threats to kill, isolation from family, manipulation of medication, being humiliated and having no control over bathing or what she wore



OVERVIEW OF LEARNING

- Agencies tended to work in silos. Whilst agencies had identified that mother's partner presented as aggressive, confrontational and controlling, they were not aware of his extensive criminal history (including convictions for domestic abuse).
- A Clare's Law (Right to Know) disclosure was made in the presence of both Child T's mother and her partner.
- MAPPA guidance specifies within the information sharing protocol that information can only be shared where necessary, lawful and proportionate. Information is shared for a specific purpose only and not automatically and generically to all agencies. Black Country CCGs are working together to ensure that appropriate health professionals attend all MAPPA meetings to ensure information can be shared with health as appropriate.
- Mother had mental health issues but there was no evidence that primary care professionals explored her home life when she attended with anxiety and depression.

- Professionals struggled to deal with the partner of Child T's mother as they felt intimidated and concerned that confrontation might impact negatively on the working relationship with the family.
- Child T's school had raised a number of concerns regarding the family, however there was no evidence that the DSCB Resolution and Escalation protocol was utilised when there were professional disagreements with Children's Social Care.
- There was no evidence of engagement with other family members (including birth father and grandparents) who may have been considered as protective factors for Child T and his mother.

There was evidence of good practice. This included

- Both primary and secondary schools have been very pro-active in offering pastoral support to all three children following the significant incident.
- Safeguarding practice within ED was exemplary. All safeguarding actions were taken at the time of attendance.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- That professionals feel confident when dealing with families who present as hostile, aggressive or violent
- That a strategy meeting is held if it is identified that an individual poses a risk to others.
- That a process is developed to ensure that appropriate health colleagues attend MAPPA meetings in order to share information if this is deemed appropriate and if the individual poses a risk to others.
- That all staff are aware of how to resolve professional disagreements and escalate concerns
- To ensure that any Clare's Law disclosure is conducted with the safety of a partner and any children as a paramount consideration
- That all family members are considered within any assessment to determine if they are protective factors



MORE INFORMATION

For further information and to access the full report visit our website:

<http://safeguarding.dudley.gov.uk>