

Learning from a Serious Case Review FD17: A summary of key learning and good practice

The [Overview Report for the Serious Case Review FD17](#) sets out the circumstances of the case and the learning for all agencies to help strengthen practice in Derby. A nine-year old child experienced severe burns to the legs, thought to be caused by scalding from hot water in a bath or shower and his parents failed to seek medical attention, which resulted in severe and life-threatening infection. Following the incident several concerns were also identified about the care of the youngest child, Child 6, who had signs of significant neglect. The family were from the Roma community.

We identified some key points from this case from both challenges that had arisen and good practice. Key features from this case include:

Raising Concerns

- a) Emails messages will not always be read quickly. If it is important and you need to know someone is aware of the information, make sure you have received a reply in writing or discussed the case with the worker or their manager;
- b) If you have made a telephone referral because you have concerns about a child, always follow this up in writing using the standard referral form within 48 hours Children's Social Care should respond in writing to any written referrals within one working day. If the referrer has not received an acknowledgement within 3 working days, they should contact Children's Social Care again.
- c) Escalate concerns if it is not possible to actively resolve professional difference of opinion (including a lack of progress in a case), always put your concerns in writing to ensure that they are clearly understood. Always follow the [DSCB Escalation Policy](#);
- d) Professionals need to ask themselves: Who is keeping the child safe? How do we know these measures are adequate? Managers should use these questions in supervision and ensure that an agreed and robust plan is in place to keep the child safe;

Working with families from different backgrounds

- e) Working with families through interpreters takes more time. Be mindful about how this is likely to affect the work you are doing with the family and seek advice if needed from your manager to make sure that you are able to cover the key areas to be discussed with the family;
- f) Be aware that the Romanes language used by Roma families includes several dialects and very little is written. Avoid assumptions that a Roma family from a particular country is able to speak the language of that country. Find out exactly how best to communicate with the individual family;
- g) Use the [Interpreter Guidance](#) to help both interpreters and agencies working together during safeguarding visits and meetings. .
- h) Guard against making generalisations about the practice and beliefs of new and emerging communities in Derby; find out what life is like for the children and parents in the individual family;

- i) Think about the impact of culture, racism and heritage, when identifying neglect and significant harm and how families may interpret / understand the concerns agencies may have;

Assessment

- j) Use the Derby Safeguarding Children Board [Thresholds Document](#) and [Neglect: Graded Care Profile](#) to help decide how concerns about abuse and neglect are identified, action required to be taken and whether suitable progress is being made.
- k) Where there is a need for cognitive and/or parenting assessments as part of a plan, seek to complete them at an early stage;
- l) Single assessments completed by Children's Social Care have a significant contribution to good multi-agency work to safeguard children. Assessments should always include checks with previous local authorities in the UK and with authorities abroad if relevant to the case;
- m) Where you are including actions in a plan or report, be explicit about: who will do what, by when and what evidence is required to demonstrate that things have improved;
- n) The outcome of single assessments should:
- Be discussed with the child and family and provided to them in written form (unless this might place a child at risk of harm or jeopardise an enquiry);
 - Taking account of confidentiality, be provided to professional referrers;
 - Given in writing to the agencies involved in providing services to the child with the action points, review dates and intended outcomes for the named child
- o) If you are a social worker, use the Memorandum of Understanding that Derby City Council has with Slovakian Authorities to help obtain and share information;
- p) Give priority to an assessment being completed during the pregnancy to ensure that maximum preparation for parenting can be provided. The [Multi Agency Protocol for Pre-birth Assessment and Intervention](#) is available to help you with this;
- q) Reports for child protection conferences or children in need meetings should be translated for families if they do not understand English (through an interpreter if they do not read);

Key points to remember:

- Be persistent;
- Ask questions – be professionally curious;
- Do not take things on face value and be aware of professional optimism;
- Seek advice and support;
- The **Thresholds document**, **Neglect: Graded Care profile** and **Escalation Policy** are three key documents that you can use to help keep children safe;
- Share information on a need to know basis;
- Obtain regular supervision.
- Attend Derby Safeguarding Children Board [multi agency training](#) to support the development of your skills and knowledge.

For further information about the work of the Derby Safeguarding Children Board

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