

STOCKPORT SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD

01 Background

Jaiden had been a settled child, doing well in school until she was a teenager. She was described as a bubbly and energetic fun loving girl by those who knew her. By the time she was a teenager she was exhibiting some elements of poor behaviour. She began to present challenging behaviour, using alcohol and was increasingly going missing from home. There was concern by agencies that she was being sexually exploited. There was also some domestic abuse and mental health issues within the family.

02 Safeguarding Concerns

Jaiden was excluded from school as a result of a serious assault on another child and her behaviour was becoming unmanageable at home and school. Her family did not share the same level of concern about her behaviour as was held by agencies who knew her. They viewed her behaviour as a normal aspect of teenage life. They felt negatively judged and felt they had no option but to agree to a voluntary admission to care. The review recognised that there was push and pull factors which drew Jaiden home regularly and that she was loved by her parents and loved them in return. It was felt she had concerns for her younger sibling who was beginning to display similar behaviours.

03 Placement

Jaiden's placement was going well and she was becoming settled, taking part in education and managing her self appropriately. She had regular periods of home visits as part of her looked after plan. She was tragically killed in a car crash during one of her home visits, when she got into a car with other young people.

04 The Review

The review found that there was a good level of help and support delivered by committed professionals across several services and locations; the tragic accident could not have been anticipated. The care of the foster placement was particularly highlighted, as Jaiden was able to develop and open and honest relationship with her carer which supported her positive achievements. The Review also concluded that holistic comprehensive assessment may have helped to really understand what was going on for Jaiden in terms of attachment, child development, impact of domestic abuse and substance misuse. It may have helped services to really understand how to engage with Jaiden more effectively.

05 Findings

The Review queried whether effective early help may have supported the family more effectively early in Jaiden's life. When problems escalated child protection processes or use of public law outline may have secured compliance from parents earlier on. School exclusion increases vulnerability and may remove a source of resilience and so needs to be carefully managed with support from other agencies.

06 Challenges for SSCB

Challenges presented by older children need to be clearly understood in the context of their life experience. How do workers make relationships which enable families to make progress and overcome resistance? Recognising when distressed behaviour is a safeguarding risk (information sharing / confidentiality) and sharing appropriately the role and function of Multi-Agency sexual exploitation process within the case management processes. The importance of reflective supervision in managing complex cases and the importance of the role of the IRO in providing independent oversight.

07 Reflections for practice

How do we find a way to work effectively with families who do not agree with our assessments?
How do we ensure information is conveyed appropriately to an area where a Stockport child is placed and that the appropriate services are put in place for them?
When do high levels of drinking for example, become a safeguarding risk?
How do we assess against confidentiality?
How do we assess risk when there is a complex family history?

