

7MB – Child A

www.safeguardingchildreninstockport.org.uk

7-minute briefings (7MB) are intended to be simple and quick to read, teams can use them within meetings as a team-based learning exercise.

Links:

Child A Local Safeguarding Practice Review:
<http://www.safeguardingchildreninstockport.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Child-A-local-child-safeguarding-practice-review.pdf>

Harmful Sexually Behaviours Policy:
https://greatermanchesterscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_harm_sex.html

How did we Review?

Following an allegation of Interfamilial Sexual Abuse and a rapid review meeting, an independent author was appointed to conduct a Serious Case Review into the circumstances surrounding the events leading to the allegation, to identify local learning. Practitioner events were also held and the family views were gathered.

Background

Child A has 2 brothers: Child B who is older than her and Child C who is younger. At the time of the incidents, child A lived with her dad and her step mum. She now lives with her mum. Her mum has a history of mental health challenges and is an known to police for crimes relating to drugs and violence. Her father is a perpetrator of domestic abuse, including against her mother, for which both Child A and Child B have been listed as a secondary subject. Her step mum is a safeguarding professional. Child A has experienced early childhood neglect, domestic abuse and she exhibits sexualised behaviours and hurts herself. Child B is known to HYMS as he experiences auditory and visual hallucinations, he has also experienced early childhood neglect and domestic abuse.

System Changes

Improved information sharing:

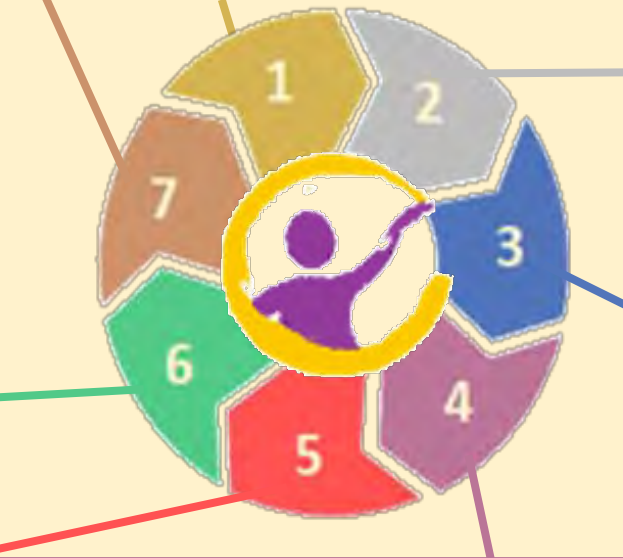
- Mental Health Practitioners based within the Multi-Agency Safeguarding and Support Hub
- Most Schools use electronic record keeping allowing quicker, easier sharing
- Work across local authority borders is improved with more effective use of chronologies and trauma informed approaches
- Team Around the School process more embedded in practice

Training:

- Trauma informed approach being rolled out across the public and voluntary sector.
- Learning Circles on Sexually Harmful Behaviour, including new tools available for practitioners
- Assessment Intervention and Moving on (AIM) training delivered in 2019, Youth Justice can now use a desktop AIM assessment with young people.

Other Key Learning from the Review

- Within the education system, the **voice of the child** was not a focus in record keeping, for example Child A saying she wanted to die, but the reasons behind this feeling not being explored further.
- There is a need to understand how a **criminal investigation** might impact on working with a family leading to a delay to move forward with interventions
- Evident that not all professionals understand the complexity of the health information recording system, leading to **information not being shared** with the right part of the system.
- Practitioners are not always **equipped with the right skills to support young people** who behave in a sexually harmful way leading to appropriate interventions not always taking place.
- In this review the **Sexually Harmful Behaviours Policy** was not followed, for example, 2 workers should be allocated, and the Youth Justice Service should be present at the strategy discussion. There is a need for the policy and processes to be embedded in practice.



Incident

In 2017 when Child A was 9 she discloses to her school that her older brother Child B has sexually assaulted her whilst she was in bed – the 2 children share a bedroom. The family do not want to press charges & the alleged offence is finalised with No Further Action. Neither the GP nor the school B attend are aware of the allegation being made at this time. Social Care classify the incident as red concluding risk remains, a safety plan is put in place with the family, and the school are asked to deliver work with the children in relation to sexually harmful behaviour. Child A's behaviour in school deteriorates following the initial incident, she is superficially harming herself and property and at high school is believed to be drinking. A further disclosure of 2 instances of further sexual abuse perpetrated by Child B to Child A is made to GMP in 2021.

Parents Views and Learning

The mum highlighted **communication** concerns as she was not initially included in the social work assessment. She felt the **family history** was not considered, and information was not successfully transferred between boroughs. The dad and step mum felt information sharing between schools was a challenge. They were concerned that due to the step mum's job, they may have received less support and advice, with an overreliance on the **parents to safeguard without additional support**, they did not recall a safety plan being discussed with them.