



Lessons Learnt Bulletin

SCR (Case C13) concerned the death of Child H, the middle child of 3 siblings, who all had child protection plans. Their father was not living with the family but was having contact with them. Child H died from an acute asthma attack that the SCR found could not have been predicted or prevented. However it did identify wider learning from the case as the children in the family were affected by the overlapping and often compounding issues of parental alcohol problems and domestic abuse.

What can we learn?

Risk assessment tools

The SCR recommended that the BSCB should develop a multi-agency risk assessment tool with the aim of improving practice when assessing the risk of significant harm. The SCR also found that there needs to be earlier recognition and earlier intervention to protect and safeguard the long-term needs of the children and families living with domestic abuse. Information on how to access a suite of risk assessment tools including the Domestic Abuse risk assessment tool can be found on the Policies and Procedures page of the BSCB website. A link to the DASH risk assessment tool/MARAC referral form can also be found via the domestic abuse procedures.

Contact

This SCR found that there was considerable delay in establishing supervised contact arrangements between the children and their father. This delay increased the risk of the father attempting to manipulate the children's mother to allow him to see the children outside of the agreed child protection plan. Research consistently tells us that domestic violence does not end with separation but rather reveals that the period during and following a couple's separation poses the greatest risk of harm to women and children (CAADA). Remember to consider the MARAC process and the DASH risk assessment tool. Advice regarding legal options available (including Clare's Law) can be found in the domestic abuse procedures.

Impact on physical health

We know that in households where there is domestic violence, even if they are not physically harmed, children may suffer lasting emotional and psychological damage as a result of witnessing it. The Adoption and Children Act 2002 Section 120 amended the definition of 'harm' in Section 31(9) of the Children Act 1989 to include 'impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another...'. This SCR reminds practitioners to also consider the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people's physical health as research tells us that children who live with domestic abuse are more vulnerable.

Remember:

- How to locate the [BSCB multi-agency safeguarding procedures](#) & [domestic abuse procedures](#)
- To book on [BSCB Multi-Agency Safeguarding training](#) Relevant courses are: - Domestic Abuse and Parental Substance Misuse
- To read the full SCR report, please visit the BSCB website [serious case review page](#).