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Safeguarding in FIVE

Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review Child R

1. Background

- In April 2020, Child R sustained serious physical injuries whilst living in temporary accommodation. Child R and his mother had only recently moved to Hackney, with concerns about domestic abuse and parenting capacity being evident in the family history. In the days immediately preceding the discovery of Child R's injuries, reports were made to the police about his safety.

2. Findings

- There were several occasions where information sharing could and should have been better; this hindered practitioners from gaining a full understanding of what Child R's daily life was like and the potential risks that he was facing.
- There was a lack of authoritative practice in response to concerns about domestic abuse and child abuse. This meant that opportunities to help and protect Child R through statutory intervention were missed.
- There were missed opportunities to better understand the patterns of risk that Child R was being exposed to from the adult males involved in his life.
- Child R was not held at the heart of practice and contact with the family did not move beyond the front-door. Whilst he was seen Child R was not spoken to and there were missed opportunities to assess Child R's physical condition.
- On occasions practitioners lacked curiosity about significant aspects of Child R's mother's background which impacted on the assessment and planning of services to ensure that Child R and his mother were safe.
- Signs of possible neglect and the identification of patterns of cumulative harm weren't effectively identified by safeguarding practitioners. The patterns of behaviour and dysfunction within Child R's family appear to have been accepted as the norm.

3. Recommendations

- Public Health Community Nursing services engaged in this review should review their policies covering the transfer and receipt of community health records (including systems to request records if not received).
- The London Safeguarding Children Partnership should review the procedures governing the transfer of children in need cases.
- The Central East Basic Command Unit of the MPS should continue its implemented process of dip sampling recordings of Body Worn Cameras to ensure officers are maintaining a clear focus on the safety and welfare of children.

Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships involved in this review should:

- seek reassurance that their practice guidance and training sufficiently emphasises the need to include relevant historical information as part of making a referral to Children's Social Care.
- promote a programme of training and routine awareness raising that reinforces the seriousness of domestic abuse in the context of children's safety.
- satisfy themselves that local threshold tools are sufficiently describing the significance of risk associated with domestic abuse, particularly where such abuse forms a repeating pattern.
- develop a plan for improving how practitioners engage with adult males that are significant to the lives of children.



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4. Reflections

- Consider the lessons from this review, discuss them in your team and identify ways you can improve your own safeguarding practice.
- Understanding the context of a child's life is key and understanding this context must form a priority for all practitioners. This is not a new feature of good practice and whilst safeguarding can be complex, some of the steps to understand the lived experience of a child are not. Make sure you are seeing children, talking to them and listening to what they are saying.
- When it comes to safeguarding children, standing still is falling behind - for all practitioners, keep your training up-to-date. Book on the CHSCP's Level 1 and/or Level 3 safeguarding training and attend refreshers when you need to.

5. Further Learning

- Read the full report on the CHSCP website [HERE](#).
- View the upcoming programme of multi-agency safeguarding training [HERE](#).
- Visit the [Practice Guidance](#) section of the CHSCP website (Domestic Violence; Information Sharing; Think Family; Working with Men; Working with Neglect).
- Sign up to the [Things You Should Know](#) briefing to keep up to date on safeguarding news and training.

