

What happened?

HS was born in the summer of 2016. At the time of their birth they were already the subject of a child protection plan that highlighted the risk professionals believed they were at from their parents. Whilst both parents were of concern to agencies there was a general feeling that HS was being properly cared for and that there was every chance that HS would remain with parents.

In August 2016 HS was brought to the accident and emergency department as parents noticed that HS had a swollen right arm. HS also had a small bruise on the left cheek and a small red lesion on the medial aspect of their left wrist. X-Rays showed a fracture of the right upper arm. In view of this HS was admitted to a paediatric ward and a full skeletal survey, CT head scan, blood tests and medical photography was arranged. Overall results showed further fractures to both lower legs as well as a fracture of the right humerus. The injuries sustained were treated as non-accidental injuries.

What did it tell us?

- The initial referral and strategy meeting was timely and correct; it represented good practice
- Information sharing was at times poor and resulted in some professionals being unaware of key issues
- With the exception of the initial single assessment, pre-birth and post birth, assessment protocols were not followed
- Some professionals were over optimistic about the parenting ability of Mum and Dad
- Mum and Dad were capable of disguised compliance and some professionals lacked professional curiosity when dealing with them
- Children's Social Care demonstrated good decision making and positive leadership
- Child protection conferences failed to resolve differences between professionals
- Over optimism and sympathy for Mum and Dad by some professionals, including the conference chair, caused confusion about the long-term plan for the family and resulted in less understanding of the risk posed

What can we do now?

How do you ensure that your information is shared correctly and appropriately?

How do you challenge decisions made in meetings when you disagree?

Are you confident that all appropriate agencies attend meetings? If not how do you deal with this?

Would you be able to recognise disguised compliance? What would you do to tackle this?

If in doubt ask for advice from your manager, safeguarding lead or Sandwell Safeguarding Business Unit on 0121 569 4800