



Statement from Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership

Serious Case Review publication – Kemarni Watson Darby

Publication date: Friday 1 July 2022

The Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership has today (Friday 1 July) published a serious case review relating to Kemarni Watson Darby who was murdered in 2018.

Following Kemarni's death in 2018, an independent review was commissioned – in line with the national Working Together 2015 guidance – by the then Sandwell Safeguarding Children Board before it was replaced with a new structure now known as Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership.

The review looked carefully at the role of services that Kemarni and his family had contact with prior to his death, to identify any areas of learning.

Following the conclusion of criminal proceedings, the Partnership is now able to publish the review, which has been updated to reflect the outcome of the trial.

Lesley Hagger, Chair of the Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership, said:

"Our thoughts and sympathies are with all those who knew and loved Kemarni.

"Partners in Sandwell always look at what we can learn from sad cases like this and where we can identify areas for learning and improvement.

"The review did provide some learning from this case and I can confirm this has already been shared with professionals and implemented by agencies.

"This learning was around training for agencies regarding the thresholds for Early Help for families, promotion of funded nursery provision and childcare, and the need to better reflect the 'voice of the child' in records.

"As partners, we are fully committed to doing everything we can to protect children.

"Kemarni and family members did have contact with a number of services across the partnership. Kemarni himself had contact with 'universal services' – being those services we would expect any young child to have contact with.

"The independent review has concluded that there were no missed opportunities for professionals to intervene and prevent his death.

"There were no identified safeguarding concerns regarding Kemarni prior to his death in 2018, and there was no children's social care involvement directly with him.

“Partners keep safeguarding training under constant review and there has been a process of continuous learning since 2018, including taking into account risks and challenges that emerged during the Covid-19 pandemic.

“Sandwell’s Early Help Partnership is led by the voluntary and community sector and has strong representation from all statutory partners and a wide range of other agencies, including schools and faith organisations. In March 2022, the Partnership launched a revised Early Help strategy – to more than 180 professionals and organisations – to help ensure children and families receive the right support, in the right place, at the right time.

“The Early Years and Childcare Service has a continuous cycle of promoting nursery and childcare places, with a good take-up of two-year-old places and priority for places given to the most vulnerable children.

“Children are at the centre of all work undertaken by the Partnership and case studies with contributions from children and families are part of meetings and audits.

“I would like to thank all professionals who contributed to the review and continue to work to support children and their families.”

Contact:

To report a child at risk in Sandwell, call the Sandwell safeguarding team on 0121 569 3100 (this number is available outside normal office hours), call West Midlands Police on 101 (24-hour non-emergency number), or contact the NSPCC helpline 0808 800 5000 (free service, lines open 24 hours a day).

If a child is in immediate danger, contact the police by dialling 999.

Please note:

This review process was completed in 2020 under the previous serious case review (SCR) procedures which have now been replaced by child safeguarding practice reviews (CSPRs).

As agreed with the National Panel – this review could not be published until the conclusion of the criminal proceedings. However, learning points from the case were shared with professionals and agencies to make sure these were embedded into practice.

Prior to publication, the serious case review report has been updated to reflect the conclusion of criminal proceedings.

The serious case review report itself is anonymised in line with national guidance.