



RS Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR) Learning Notes

What happened?

RS was a 4 month old baby living with their parents and older sibling when they received potentially life changing non accidental injuries. The family had recently moved from Birmingham, where they had lived with maternal grandparents.

Father had moved to the Midlands from London and had a history of drug abuse and criminality. He was under supervision of Community Rehabilitation Companies in London and Birmingham but failed to engage with his orders. Health agencies were unaware of his background. Mother's vulnerability was identified in her first pregnancy.

There were concerns about RS' weight gain, not being registered with a GP and not being brought to appointments—a pattern also seen with older sibling.

Two weeks before the serious incident, RS was taken to a health clinic with a fading bruise.

Mother's explanation was accepted and safeguarding advice was not sought.

What did we learn?

- Bruising on non mobile babies**, no matter how minor, should always be treated seriously and advice immediately sought from the safeguarding lead.
- Practitioners should guard against '**second guessing**' the response of MASH to a referral of concern about a child.
- Importance of early identification of vulnerability, assessment of risk and consideration of appropriate services including Early Help.
- Importance of gaining an understanding of who lives in a household and their role, not focussing solely on mothers but proactively **engaging with fathers**.
- Safeguarding should be a priority for all agencies and practitioners providing services to adults and should '**Think Family**'
- Information sharing** alone does not safeguard children. This is a dynamic process requiring checking back, understanding, agreement on its significance, actions to be taken and how these will be reviewed.
- Direct communication** is the best way to share information, analyse risks and agree a way forward
- Be aware of the impact of **professional desensitisation** and cultural normalisation
- Importance of **professional curiosity** and respectful challenge
- Be aware that moving between areas, away from support systems, can increase a family's vulnerability. Careful transfer of responsibility between practitioners is essential.

How can we learn from this case?

Treating any bruising on a non-mobile baby seriously, no matter how minor, by seeking advice from a safeguarding lead and following multi agency guidance

By valuing the role of fathers, meaningfully engaging with them, and not focussing solely on mothers

By ensuring that communication with other practitioners is meaningful, dynamic and that actions are agreed and reviewed

Recognising when additional, targeted, services are required to meet the needs of, and safeguard, children

If in doubt, seek advice from your manager, safeguarding lead or contact the SCSP Business Unit on SCSP_Business@sandwell.gov.uk