

# Learning Briefing Child R



NOTTINGHAM CITY  
Safeguarding  
Children  
PARTNERSHIP

## How this document can be used

- Please read this document carefully and consider the learning in respect of families you are currently working with.
- Keep this document in a handy place to support easy reference in future work.
- Take this document to team meetings and share with colleagues.
- Use this document in supervisions for reference and to support case management / reflective practice.

## Case summary

Child R was presented at the hospital Emergency Department with a headache, followed by vomiting and drowsiness, he also had a large number of bruises over his body. On examination he was found to have a life threatening head injury; bleeding in the brain that required urgent neurosurgery. Following surgery and after a short stay in hospital he made a good recovery.

Following a police investigation the boyfriend of child R's mother was arrested and subsequently convicted of Grievous Bodily Harm for the injuries to Child R.

At the time of the incident Child R was subject to a Children in Need Plan and had an allocated social worker, due to concerns in relation to possible physical abuse. This included several referrals in relation to injuries and bruising to Child R.

## The key findings from the review

The review found that:

- Section 47 child protection procedures were not followed, there were gaps in the process that led to missed opportunities to recognise earlier assaults.
- There were weaknesses in the children's assessment and evidence of confirmatory bias. Influenced by mothers self-reporting and the child's positive presentation. Consideration of child R's lived experiences was inadequate, specifically his experience of thirteen injuries over a period of nine months.
- There was an absence of chronologies in case files and to support safeguarding referrals. Both of which could have supported identification of injury patterns earlier.

## Learning

### Compliance with Child Protection procedures

- ♦ Compliance with procedures is a reoccurring theme from local serious cases reviews. It is essential that workers understand and apply child protection procedures; as per the **local interagency guidance**. When procedures are not followed it allows for gaps in practice, these gaps can lead to a failure to identify or adequately manage risks.
- ♦ Strategy meetings play a pivotal role in multi-agency information sharing and decision making. Including decisions about medical examinations and response to the findings. It is critical that these take place in line with interagency procedures.
- ♦ Safeguarding concern should always be referred to Children and Families Direct MASH, in line with the interagency procedures, regardless of the status of the case. Even if you believe it has recently been assessed and closed.

### Ensuring quality of assessments

- ♦ Assessments of physical injuries must be holistic, take adequate account of the child's lived experience, the context to any injuries and must not rely on self-reporting by a parent to reach conclusions.
- ♦ It is important to remember that not all children who are being physically abused will present in distress. Workers should be alert to inconsistencies in accounts and robustly explore these.
- ♦ Workers must remain open to the possibility of abuse until there is clear evidence to discount it.
- ♦ Managers should actively scrutinise assessments and where appropriate challenge the evidence base of conclusions

### Effective use of Chronologies

- ♦ This review serves as a reminder to the workforce, of the value of chronologies. Considerable work has already been undertaken locally on the use and effectiveness of chronologies to support identification of concerns and support effective case management.
- ♦ All workers should ensure that chronologies are completed and active for children and young people they are working with.
- ♦ Chronologies must be used to support safeguarding referrals where there are ongoing concerns in relation to physical injuries.

### Addition Resources

Interagency Safeguarding Procedures – [click here](#) NICE guidance Child maltreatment: [click here](#)  
NSPCC report No one noticed, no one heard: [click here](#) Bite-sized Learning Sheet

