

Circumstances – What Happened

- A 3-year-old child presented to hospital having been found to be unresponsive by a sibling. They had been playing out in the sun throughout the day, but not drinking or eating. EMAS were concerned and alerted Social Care.
- The child had an altered conscious level, was dehydrated and severely malnourished and blood tests revealed their sodium level was extremely high at >180 (should be between 135-145) indicating extreme dehydration. It was felt that this was a near fatal event.
- Child was admitted to the intensive care unit, and noted to be underweight, weighing less than 6.5kgs at the age of 3 years and 3 months (as opposed to 14kg average for their age). Child was wearing 9-month-old clothing, and it was observed that they were not mobile or able to communicate in line with development for a child of that age.
- Due to the above concerns, the Paediatrician referred to social care and Nottinghamshire Police, and subsequently the parents were arrested for Child Neglect.
- A strategy meeting was held. Several professionals including the paediatrician were in agreement, that regardless of the cause for their weight and general presentation, parents had not sought medical attention for their child over many months and that this represented extreme neglect.
- The child was part of a child in need plan (CIN) at the time of admission and came from a large family group (10 + children). Some of the siblings had speech and language delay. Review highlighted that many of the children had a number of missed appointments were noted and neither the faltering growth nor the Was Not Brought/non-attendance policy were followed appropriately. The child was not seen as an individual and was seen as part of a collective group, leading to child's individual needs being missed.

Partnership Learning Points

- Review working arrangements when working with large families to ensure that the needs and lived experience of each individual child are captured and inform practice
- Professionals working with children need to understand key developmental milestones to inform assessments.
- Health organisations and the wider partnership need to explore their current processes regarding the NCSCP Was Not Brought/non-engagement guidance to understand the blocks in implementing this consistently as a matter of priority.
- Maternity services across the health systems should review if their organisation's guidance or policy for late bookings of maternity care alerts them to consider a safeguarding response.
- Revision of the Faltering Growth Policy and linking to key areas of neglect work and child development to include partner agencies.
- Explore what the barriers are to agencies using the neglect toolkit and make relevant amendments to the cross-authority toolkit and associated training, ensuring it covers working with large families.
- Promotion of the revised [Nottingham city threshold of needs](#) will highlight times when early intervention services should be considered in order to prevent escalation of needs.

Links to National/ Themed Guidance

[National review into the murders of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson](#)

highlighted similar concerns around information sharing, robust critical thinking and understanding the daily life of children.

Agency Specific Learning

*** If you require an audio descriptive version of this Learning Brief, please contact the NCSCP business office:**

Email: Safeguarding.Partnership@nottinghamcity.gov.uk