

Learning from case reviews – national publications

NSCP would like to bring to your attention 3 recent national publications which contain important learning from child safeguarding case reviews.

1. Complexity and challenge: A triennial analysis of serious case reviews 2014-2017.

This report analyses 368 Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) relating to incidents between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2017. In addition to the full report, this [link](#) provides access to a suite of materials to support learning from the report across a range of agencies including LSCP's, Social work, Police and criminal justice, Health, Education and Early Help.

A sample of the main areas for learning for agencies include

Neglect and its relationship to poverty

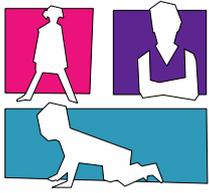
- Neglect featured in 75% of all the SCRs examined
- Neglect is the most common category of abuse for children on child protection plans
- Poverty leads to additional complexity, stress and anxiety and can heighten the risk of neglect
- Most children living in poverty do not experience neglect. However, the co-existence of poverty and neglect can escalate adverse outcomes
- Recognition of poverty and its impact on parenting was often

missing. If recognised, poverty was often perceived as an outcome not a cause of a family's needs and difficulties

- Professionals working in deprived communities can become desensitised when working with families in poverty and accept lower standards or care

Vulnerable adolescents

- Nearly one in three SCRs involved children aged 11 and over
- Risk-taking/violent behaviour by the young person and child sexual exploitation (CSE) were the most common causes of serious harm in adolescent cases
- Outside infancy, suicide was the most common category of deaths related to maltreatment
- Adolescents about whom there are safeguarding concerns often have early experiences of abuse and neglect, separation or loss and time spent in care
- Teenagers spend less time at home and more with their peers. While harm can continue to come from within the family during adolescence, there is increased potential for extra-familial risk and harm
- Both virtual and local communities provide spaces for exploitation



Multi-agency working

Sharing information between agencies and across local authorities was an issue:

- There is a need for clear multi-agency plans at child in need or child protection level
- Assessment and planning tools must be designed to facilitate communication of concerns across agencies
- The lead professional's role is important for maintaining contact for the child or family; coordinating interventions; and 'holding' the full picture of the child's life
- Cross-service chronologies and consistent use of clear descriptive language are important
- Opportunities for professional challenge should be supported- practitioners should feel able to ask questions about each other's roles and decision-making
- The number of different agencies involved in delivering care can result in fragmented and uncoordinated services. 'Silo-working' may occur within and between agencies
- Information sharing is crucial
- It is important to have a lead professional who acts as the main contact for the child or family and coordinates interventions
- Effective multi-agency plans depend on all relevant agencies being represented at meetings
- Referral forms, assessment tools and incident-logging tools should use language that explicitly depicts

issues in ways that do not dilute impact and harm

2. The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel Annual Report 2018 – 2019

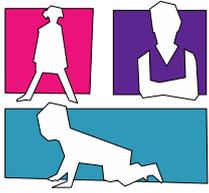
The National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, which was formed in July 2018, recently published its first [annual report](#). The report gives an insight into the work of the panel and provides a useful summary of key themes and messages emanating from a study of all "rapid reviews" completed by LSCPs between July 18 and December 19.

Key Practice themes which the report addresses in detail include: -

- Optimistic Thinking
- Information sharing, risk assessment & decision making
- Children returned home post court proceedings
- Adults with a history of offending
- Domestic Abuse
- Adolescents: Autism, Mental Health & Suicide
- Including Men
- Health plans for children
- Children Educated at Home
- Written agreements
- Resolving professional disputes

Key messages from the report include: -

The Panel has seen an unacceptably high level of deaths of babies from co-sleeping in families in the context of abuse and neglect - over 40 in 16 months.



27% (144) of the rapid reviews involved the death or serious harm of a child under 1 year old due to non-accidental injury. Perpetrators of such trauma on babies are overwhelmingly their parents or parental partners.

3. Safeguarding children at risk from criminal exploitation

This is the first National Child Safeguarding Practice Review undertaken by the “National Panel.” The specific focus of the [review](#) is the service response to children who have already been drawn into criminal exploitation and where high levels of risk of serious harm have been identified. The review focused on 21 children from 17 local areas who died or experienced serious harm and whose cases were notified to the Panel between July 2018 and March 2019.

Key findings listed below are covered in detail in the full report

- Ethnicity and gender appear to be factors
- Known risk factors around vulnerability don't always act as predictors
- Exclusion from mainstream school is seen as a trigger point for risk of serious harm

- Effective practice is not widely known about or used
- Trusted relationships with children are important
- Parental engagement is nearly always a protective factor
- Responding to the ‘critical moment’
- Moving children and families works for a short period but is not effective as a long-term strategy
- More priority should be given to disrupting perpetrator activity
- The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is not well understood and is inconsistently used
- Comprehensive risk management arrangements can make a difference

Local guidance on many of the topics covered in the national documents referred to above can be found on the NSCP website at <https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/nscp/policy-procedures-and-guidance>