



## LEARNING & IMPROVEMENT BULLETIN: Serious Case Review PN16 (Madison)

### SUMMARY:

Madison's birth father died when she was very young and she lived with her mother, stepfather and half-siblings. From an early age professionals were concerned that she was being treated differently from her half-siblings. Maddison had been labelled as problematic, with self-harming behaviours, failure to thrive and developmental delay which had not been considered in the context of abuse and neglect at the hands of the carers. Agencies responded to some reports of emotional and physical abuse but struggled to intervene in a way that brought about positive change in her life. There were also indicators of potential sexual abuse which were not recognised or responded to, and occasions when the views of the parents overshadowed the voice of the child.

There is no single index incident or event that triggered the review. Madison made disclosures of abuse and asked to be looked after by the local authority in 2016, aged 16 years.

### KEY LEARNING:

1. When working with cases over a number of years professionals need to use a chronology of information to provide context for enquiries and assessments;
2. We need to be aware of the danger of losing sight of the needs and views of the child and placing the interests or views of adults ahead of these;
3. Children will lose confidence when professionals are unable or unwilling to take sufficiently effective action in response to their concerns and this may affect their willingness to disclose future abuse;
4. Children of sufficient age and understanding want to be kept informed of the progress of enquiry and assessment and expect explanations about what decisions are being taken and why;
5. Professionals should reflect on how best to enable children to express their views and promote opportunities for the child's views, wishes and feelings to be heard and understood.

### IMPROVING PRACTICE:

Here are some suggestions for improving practice:-

- Share this bulletin in team meetings and during supervision.
- Make use of the NSCB/NCSCB Interagency Guidance for Practitioners [Completing Chronologies and Genograms](#)
- Read the Interagency Guidance [Good Practice Supporting the Voice of the Child](#)
- The full report regarding this Serious Case Review is available in the [Learning from Practice](#) section of the NSCB website.
- The NSCB provides a range of training opportunities which are relevant to this review and can be booked via the [NSCB website](#)
- The online [NSCB inter agency safeguarding procedures](#) provide detailed guidance across the range of safeguarding issues.