

Learning Briefing UN21 “David and Daniel”

Circumstances

This review addressed how professionals responded to harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) between two siblings, 11 year old David and 14 year old Daniel. The boys were in a long-term foster care placement with three other siblings. Two of the siblings were assessed as having learning difficulties and the disclosures involved Daniel harming David.

There had been a history of involvement from children’s social care due to concerns about neglect. David disclosed sexual harm from Daniel in December 2020, this had not been the first disclosure. Restrictive practices were put in place in the foster placement to try and manage this.

Information about HSB was retained mostly by children’s social care, and not shared more widely with health and education. Strategy discussions did not include wider agencies, and the IRO was not fully aware of the circumstances. A HSB specialist was not consulted, and the behaviour was misinterpreted as not abusive. Language used influenced the meaning. The school, who had the most information about the children’s learning needs were not consulted around this assessment. The experienced foster carers took a lead role in communication.

Further information

[Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews \(nottinghamshire.gov.uk\)](https://nottinghamshire.gov.uk/professionalcuriosity.pdf)

[professionalcuriosity.pdf \(nottinghamshire.gov.uk\)](https://nottinghamshire.gov.uk/professionalcuriosity.pdf)

[East Midlands Children and Young People’s Sexual Assault Service - East](https://emcypsas.co.uk/)

[Midlands Children and Young People’s Sexual Assault Service \(emcypsas.co.uk\)](https://emcypsas.co.uk/)

Partnership Learning Points

- *How professionals responded to disclosures of sexual behaviour between siblings and the need for the use of **expertise, toolkits and best practice guidance**.*
- *The need for **precise language** in the recording of sexual behaviours*
- *The need for assessments to take **previous traumatic events** and other significant factors into account*
- ***Risk assessments** for sibling groups should take into account the needs of all the children. It may be that children are not best placed together in all circumstances.*
- *Complicated organisational pathways can impede effective cross agency working*
- *There is a need for clarity regarding the role of foster carers, and their degree of influence with professionals*
- *Emphasis of the role of the independent reviewing office and the need for **professional curiosity from the wider professional group**.*

Learning Briefing

Agency Specific Learning

Childrens social care

- Ensure social workers for looked after children have Harmful Sexual behaviour training and use this effectively.
- Use of HSB consultants for advice.
- Use updated guidance on permitted practices in foster placements.
- Improving chronologies in fostering services.

Partnership actions

Nottinghamshire safeguarding children partnership and the Looked after children and care leavers board should provide clarity about the lines of accountability to promote care for young people who are looked after.

Education

- Schools encouraged to constructively challenge decisions.

Health services

- Reminder for staff to be professionally curious.
- Child's voice to be recorded in consultations.
- CAMHS are now commissioned to offer consultation for people working with children with complex needs.