



LEARNING & IMPROVEMENT BULLETIN: Serious Case Review MN15 (Perry)

SUMMARY:

This case involved Perry and three siblings who had extensive agency involvement over a number of years in relation to poor home conditions and neglect. Three of the four children in the family had mild learning difficulties. They were described at various times as lacking in personal hygiene, unkempt with constant head lice leading to social isolation. They showed evidence of developmental delay, lacked important social and emotional skills and were often hungry. There was a cyclical pattern of agency attention followed by minor improvement which relapsed once agencies reduced their level of scrutiny. Escalating concerns in relation to Perry's physical health which emerged in 2015 were not responded to in a timely manner and Perry was admitted to hospital with significant injuries resulting from an untreated infection.

KEY LEARNING:

1. Understanding neglect has the potential to cause severe physical injury and emotional and psychological damage and not viewing it as a lower order or less harmful form of abuse.
2. Neglected children are likely to have lower self-esteem and be socially isolated and this may be compounded by learning difficulties and/or disability.
3. Practitioners need to have a clear and shared understanding with Children's Social Care as to how information provided by them is to be viewed and acted upon, for example, is it being accepted as a child protection referral.
4. Where there is a disagreement on whether concerns amount to a referral or whether there are delays in responding to information provided professionals should understand the procedures for resolving professional disagreements and make use of them.
5. Effective joint working needs clarity around roles and responsibilities particularly in relation to child protection and criminal investigations. Strategy discussions are a key component in this.
6. Professional guidance and tools were available but not always used.

IMPROVING PRACTICE:

Here are some suggestions for improving practice:-

- Share this bulletin in team meetings and during supervision.
- Familiarise yourself with the [NSCB Local Practice Guidance on child neglect](#) and [Resolving Professional Differences \(Escalation Procedure\)](#) and be clear about when and how you would use them.
- The NSCB provides a range of training opportunities which are relevant to this review and can be booked via the [NSCB website](#)
- The full report regarding this Serious Case Review is available in the [Learning from Practice](#) section of the NSCB website. The online [NSCB inter agency safeguarding procedures](#) provide detailed guidance across the range of safeguarding issues.