

South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership
Child Safeguarding Practice Review
SAM
September 2025

Sam*

The South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership agreed to undertake a Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR) to consider practice and systems there are concerns about the child's mental health along with child protection concerns at home. This follows a serious incident in 2024 where a 14-year-old child attempted suicide, resulting in potentially life-changing injuries. She was known to have made previous plans/attempts to end her life.

*anonymised for publication

Theme: Domestic Abuse (DA)

- Sam and her siblings were exposed to DA, this trauma was compounded by other forms of trauma including neglect and physical abuse
- Over 40 incidents of DA between Sam's father and his partner
- There is evidence of cumulative harm
- There is a link between Sam's experiences of domestic abuse and neglect and her emotional vulnerability and mental health struggles, including suicidality

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises children as victims in their own right this review found practice had not caught up with policy

Children's voices must be heard and acted on when they express distress or suicidality

Adopted children are uniquely vulnerable due to early trauma and disrupted attachments

Supporting adopted children with complex trauma requires coordinated, trauma-informed, and proactive multi-agency responses that go beyond incident-based interventions to address cumulative harm, emotional vulnerability, and the child's lived experience

The Children's Partnership commissioned Nicki Pettitt, an independent reviewer to lead this CSPR



Professionals from all of the involved agencies and Sam took part in the review

'People must give a kid help BEFORE it gets really bad'
Sam

Theme: Responding to children with mental health issues

- Sam showed signs of emotional distress from a young age
- Her parents often minimised or misunderstood her mental health needs
- Safety plans were often incident specific rather than addressing the overall safety and wellbeing
- The review calls for a multi-agency strategy to assess and respond to suicidality – not just reacting to incidents but understanding the child's capacity and intent over time.

Theme: Information Sharing & Communication

- Sam's school were unaware of escalating concerns after a serious incident that took place in the school holidays.
- There needs to be a plan to share with schools even outside of term time.
- When a plan ends there must be clear communication to all those involved

Theme: Online activity & Social Media

Sam posted videos of herself in risky and self-harming situations across multiple social media accounts. Posts increased vulnerability and potentially posed risk to viewers. Online behaviours can be a reflection of emotional distress.

You can read the full CSPR by clicking here

