

South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership
Child Safeguarding Practice Review
Family A
January 2023

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



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



Members of the family also contributed their views to the CSPR

Theme: Working with Fathers

- Fathers need to be fully considered in assessments and plans
- There is routine questioning for women about Domestic Abuse, but this doesn't happen for men
- There were opportunities for improved professional curiosity about Domestic Abuse in respect of Father in this case

Family A

The South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership agreed to undertake a Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR) by considering the engagement of professionals with a family of three children who are anonymised as Family A.

When the children were under 5 years old, their father died and their mother has been convicted of his murder. At the time of their father's death, the children were on child protection plans and a decision had been made to implement the Public Law Outline due to concerns about domestic abuse, the impact on the children of the parent's poor mental health and substance misuse, and the emotional neglect of the children.

Recommendations

1. SGSCP considers the practice briefing on safeguarding children in families where there is domestic abuse that was commissioned following the National CSPR 'Child Protection in England' to align learning
2. Consider the learning from this CSPR in the review of Domestic Abuse Training that is underway
3. All agencies review paperwork to ensure all GPs for the family are recorded and that relevant information is shared with them all
4. Partner agencies provide assurance regarding what they are doing to promote the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 in respect of children as victims of domestic abuse
5. Consider making 'including fathers as equal parents' a priority for 2023 onwards
6. Share this CSPR with Safeguarding Adults Board and Community Safety Partnership with a view to considering commissioning of services for lower level perpetrators of Domestic Abuse
7. Information about orders or plans in respect of Domestic Abuse (e.g. MARAC and DVPOs) are shared with all professionals working with children in the family, and that the MARAC plan and any plan/s for the children reflect and compliment each other
8. SGCP considers how it can ensure that professionals in all partner agencies are aware of the responsibilities for and services available to care leavers

Theme: Full understanding of family history is needed for an assessment:

- Impact of childhood trauma needs to be considered in assessment by any agency.
- Practitioners need to be curious about multiple presentations and what lies behind this and not treat incidents in isolation
- Vulnerabilities need to be explored, mental health, drug or alcohol misuse, domestic abuse, being a care leaver

Theme: Domestic Abuse

- Making assumptions about who is the victim and who is the perpetrator in a family can lead to ineffective plans
- When there are claims and counter claims it is vital to unpick 'who does what to who'
- Understanding the power dynamic is crucial
- Building a good relationship - trust is key to effective working

Theme: Remain child centred when there are dominating parental factors

- Consider what a day in the life of this child is like
- Be aware that a child's behaviour may be their 'voice'
- Recognise and challenge child blaming language

Evidence of Good Practice

- The Transitions team are providing Freedom Programme work with a group of care leavers as a preventative measure. This is good practice and consideration should be given to widening this approach
- Parent Link worker at the school has been consistent and attended core group meetings and had regular check-ins with the child at school and continues to do this now
- Support is available to care leavers until the age of 25, and this is good practice and responsible corporate parenting

Couples in an abusive relationship sometimes decide not to separate and safety planning needs to happen

The policy of separate and isolate does not always work

Mother told the review that the requirement to separate from her partner meant she had to be secretive and could then not ask for help or be honest with professionals in case she would 'lose' her children

Click here to see resources about Domestic Abuse and links to MARAC

You can read the full CSPR Family A by clicking here

