

HSCP Chair: Jenny Coles

Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Response to Publication of SCR on Child K

This Serious Case Review (SCR) concerns a 16-year-old child (Child K) who sadly died after taking his own life. There was multi-agency involvement with Child K and his family during Child K's teenage years. Child K was the subject of a child protection plan for a relatively short period as a result of concerns about domestic abuse taking place in the family. During this time, Child K was diagnosed as having an autistic spectrum disorder. Apart from school, there were no other services involved with Child K at the time of his death.

This review has demonstrated that professionals followed policy and procedure and utilised available practice models and tools. Professionals were committed to providing a good service and there were many occasions when there was evidence of excellent practice. The overarching learning from this case is to highlight limitations in the extent to which practice models and approaches, put into operation within a framework of child protection procedures, can be flexible enough to offer a personalised approach to children and families who have unusual or unique features.

The recommendations and responses are as follows;

Recommendation 1 - Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) to consider the recent evidence on the value of a trauma-informed relational approach (including Research in Practice) suggesting that greater flexibility is needed so that the child's preferred relationship influences decisions about the allocation of professional roles and responsibilities.

Partnership Response – *The Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership has developed a multi-agency package of training over the past year which includes the value of adopting a trauma-informed practice approach to working with children and young people. The partnership has provided this to safeguarding leads in schools, plus other multi-agency professionals through a series of workshops.*

The partnership is committed to continuing this work and will be delivering a full day conference and further workshops to support this approach during 2020-2021.

Recommendation 2 – Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) to receive a progress report about implementation of the new CAMHS/Mental Health pathway from either the Clinical Commissioning Groups or the Health and Wellbeing Board and provide support and challenge.

Partnership Response – *The Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Executive group will request a full assurance report from the Clinical Commissioning Groups on the progress of the new CAMHS/Mental Health Pathway during 2020. It is part of the executive's function to act as a challenge and support to partners and ensure that safeguarding remains central to any new service developments in Hertfordshire.*

Recommendation 3 -. Children's Services, in association with multi-agency partners, to review cases of Domestic Abuse before closure to confirm that couples and children have been signposted to counselling/mediation services.

Partnership Response – *In conjunction with key partners Children's Services will conduct case sampling / audit work on case closures which contain domestic abuse elements to ensure appropriate sign posting have been provided for children and adults in the family. The findings of this work will be shared across the partnership and any associated recommendations for practice improvement will be implemented through the policy, practice and procedures sub-group of the partnership.*

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Recommendation 4 – The Domestic Abuse Executive Board to consider whether current work streams (Needs Assessment & Domestic Abuse Strategy Review) are paying sufficient attention to the availability of emotional wellbeing services for men, and for children who have suffered harm as a result of living in households where Domestic Abuse has featured.

Partnership Response – *The Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Executive group will request a full assurance report from the Domestic Abuse Board Executive during 2020 on the availability of emotional wellbeing services for men, and for children who have suffered harm as a result of living in households where Domestic Abuse has featured. It is part of the executive's function to act as a challenge and support to partners and ensure that safeguarding remains central to any new service developments in Hertfordshire.*

Recommendation 5 – Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership to consider whether current practice and service provision is sufficiently sensitive to the cultural, historic and gender context when providing multi-agency services across the partnership, including to families from a background outside of the main Black and Minority Ethnic groups in Hertfordshire.

Partnership Response – *The Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership conduct multi-agency audits on various areas of safeguarding practice. The partnership always includes individuals from black and minority ethnic groups within these audits and this practice will continue. The audit programme for 2020-21 will include questions on cultural sensitivity in practice and provision of services.*

The partnership also provides regular training for multi-agency professionals on various topics, these include general safeguarding awareness, safeguarding vulnerable groups, self-harm and suicide and physical abuse. All trainers are aware of the importance of cultural sensitivity and include this when delivering sessions. As part of gaining further assurances trainers will be required to review all materials to ensure this is clearly embedded in resources and materials.

Recommendation 6 - Hertfordshire Children's Services to update Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership on how the specific issues identified in this Serious Case Review have been addressed, Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership to provide support and challenge.

Partnership Response – *As outlined in the recommendations of this review, Hertfordshire Children's Services in conjunction with key partners will work together to ensure that any future recommendations from identified audits will be embedded in practice through guidance, training and supervision.*

Recommendation 7 - Further development of the motivational interviewing approach to be linked to other service developments currently taking place in Hertfordshire's multi-disciplinary adolescent teams.

Partnership Response – *Hertfordshire Children's Services currently use a motivational interviewing approach within the Family Safeguarding Service. This has been successful and motivational interviewing has now been identified as a training need for the wider partnership. A package of training is being scoped which will be available to all partners in 2020-21 so staff from all disciplines can develop skills in this approach. The Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership learning and development group will lead this implementation and report back to strategic partners on up take and evaluation.*