

Child LC Serious Case Review Learning Brief **Published 14th June 2017**

Case Summary

Lancashire LSCB commissioned a Serious Case Review (SCR) regarding a child known as Child LC who died whilst in the care of their parents. Father has been found guilty of murder and mother pleaded guilty to causing or allowing the death of a child. Both parents have received custodial sentences.

During the timeframe used for the SCR, the family were known to Children Social Care following the notification of a domestic abuse incident where Father had assaulted Mother and roughly handled Child LC. Following the incident a written agreement was used however this was not well documented and Mothers vulnerabilities were never taken into account. Within the SCR, mother expressed that she felt the written agreement was unrealistic and placed all the responsibility on her for protecting Child LC from Father.

Father was a frequent cannabis user and was noted by the police as being under the influence of cannabis when Child LC was found unresponsive.

The review highlighted key themes which are listed below:

- Agencies need to ensure that they quality assure their information prior to sharing with other agencies or submitting referrals/ timelines to MASH. Professionals should also ensure relevant historical information (about all family members) is shared when submitting timelines to MASH;
- Midwives need to be aware that due to some of the negative impacts of social media some teenage mothers may be reluctant to engage with the service. In such situations, agencies need to be innovative and work together to encourage engagement e.g. suggesting they bring someone with them to the first session;
- All professionals including Maternity Services need to recognise the importance of engaging with fathers, exercising appropriate professional curiosity when required and encourage fathers to talk about developing their relationship with their child;
- All professionals should gain understanding about the seriousness of cannabis use, the impact on children, the impact of parenting capacity and decision making and when to refer to specialist services. (The LSCB will be developing an awareness raising programme and documentation to support agencies and practitioners with this);
- Written agreements are not usually appropriate for circumstances involving domestic abuse. If professionals are to use written agreements they must include specific conditions that are achievable and measurable. Managers should supervise and offer guidance to professionals who are overseeing agreements and there must be regular monitoring and accurate recording of any developments;
- In cases with suspected domestic abuse, professionals should consider the use of a Domestic Violence Protection Order (DVPO);
- Professionals should always consider a multi-agency meeting to ensure more information is shared in relation to the family circumstances;