

Serious Case Review in relation to the death in 2015 of Child AC.

Response from Cumbria Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)

In September 2015, Cumbria LSCB began a Serious Case Review (SCR) in relation to the services that were provided to Child AC and/or his family. The review scrutinised the work of the following agencies:

- Cumbria Partnership Foundation Trust - School Nurse, Child and Adolescent Mental health Services
- Youth Offending Service
- Cumbria Police
- Children's Services – Social Care
- Family GP
- Cumbria Health on Call
- North Cumbria University Hospital Trust
- Schools and Pupil Referral Unit
- Third Sector and Private Providers
- Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust– secure accommodation

The full findings of the SCR are set out in the overview report which should be read alongside this response.

The table below sets out the main points of learning from the Serious Case Review for the LSCB and how the LSCB will ensure practice improves across all services for children in Cumbria, with dates when impacts are expected to be realised.

The work to implement the recommendations and to monitor their impact on practice will become part of the long term work of the LSCB and member agencies. The implementation of these recommendations will be managed through the Board's Business Group and the long-term implications will be tested through the Board's Performance Management and Quality Assurance Group to evidence the expected impacts and these will be reported in the Board's Annual Reports.

Gill Rigg

Independent Chair – Cumbria LSCB

8 July 2016

LSCB RESPONSE

THEME 1: Working with Children and Young People in secure settings

Finding AC1
In this case the planning at the start of custodial sentence and for discharge did not involve agencies who had been involved with Child AC and his family; therefore they could not contribute to the planning for his resettlement when he came home.
Recommendation AC1
Cumbria LSCB to assure itself of the quality and effectiveness of planning for children detained in secure centres.
Lesson AC1
Professionals who are involved with a child or young person who is detained in a secure unit, should ensure their continued participation in planning, especially as the child or young person approaches resettlement.
LSCB Action
The LSCB Policy and Procedures Group will consider the need for a policy for children and young people who are detained in secure settings. This should include multi-agency planning for their resettlement. (November 2016)
The LSCB will conduct an audit of children and young people who have been released from secure settings to ensure that the planning for resettlement was multi-agency and test the quality and effectiveness of the transition. (April 2017)
How will we know
The audit will show good multi-agency involvement and effective planning for children leaving secure settings. (May 2017)

THEME 2: Working with young people and their families who do not engage

Finding AC2

In this case there was an increase in Child AC's risk taking behaviour and this was not robustly challenged as there was professional optimism about the family's capacity to change without further intervention.

Recommendation AC2

Cumbria LSCB to arrange a multi-agency event around the subject of families who do not fully engage with services and where there is deterioration in behaviour. The event should focus on strategic as well as front-line learning.

Lesson AC2

Professionals need to remain focussed on the needs of the children - when working with families who appear to engage with support, or engage well, but there is little evidence of progress and, with other agencies may need to consider an escalation in intervention.

LSCB Action

The LSCB will arrange a multi-agency event around the subject of families who do not fully engage and deteriorating in behaviour with young people and their families with agencies. The event will focus on strategic as well as front-line learning. (December 2016)

The Section 11 quality assurance process for 2016-17 for relevant agencies will include a check on workforce development around escalation of concerns. (July 2017)

How will we know

Professionals will have engaged in the event and the feedback will be positive in terms of their learning. (January 2017)

THEME 3: Working with Children and Young People who misuse substances

Finding AC3
In this case there was intelligence to say that Child AC was using Cannabis, however there is no evidence that the risks associated with this, alongside other vulnerabilities were considered holistically in the assessments for Child AC.
Recommendation AC3
Cumbria LSCB to raise awareness of the risks associated with substance misuse, particularly amongst young people who demonstrate other vulnerability factors.
Lesson AC3
Professionals, who work with children and young people, where there is suspicion of substance misuse, must use this information when considering risk.
LSCB Action
<p>Cumbria LSCB will review its policy of working with Children and Young People who abuse substances to ensure that it highlights the needs to take account of other vulnerability factors when assessing risk. (August 2016)</p> <p>Cumbria LSCB to raise awareness of the policy for working with children and young people who abuse substances and also highlight the need to consider “suspicions” of substance misuse, with a newsletter in the Autumn of 2016. (November 2016)</p> <p>Cumbria LSCB will seek assurance regarding the current service offer for young people who are misusing substances and outcomes for these young. (report to LSCB December 2016)</p>
How will we know
<p>The next staff survey will ask a question regarding those children and young people for whom there is intelligence about substance misuse and whether they have been able to escalate concerns appropriately. (November 2016)</p> <p>Children who access services for substance misuse will have improved outcomes evidenced through the LSCB Assurance request. (December 2016)</p>

The report identified the following additional lessons:

- A. Agencies with a responsibility for working with children who are placed in another area need to consider how they communicate and share information with organisations outside of their usual local partnerships or networks.
- B. Agencies that hold a rich mix of information on children should consider how they can store that information in a format that can be shared effectively when there is an appropriate requirement.
- C. Where a child is subject of more than one statutory plan, it is important that the managers of each plan ensure there is effective coordination between each other and that the identified risks are being managed effectively.
- D. Professionals working with children who display non-compliance or passive avoidance should consider what incentive measures they may need in place to secure more effective engagement.
- E. Where children are placed in residential or secure centres a large distance from their homes consideration should be given to using communication technology to maximise agency engagement at meetings.
- F. Agencies working with children who demonstrate risk-taking behaviour should challenge themselves to consider the possible longer term consequences in respect of the risk-taking behaviour that is being displayed and how that behaviour may be managed.
- G. Agencies engaging with families should give consideration to the local context in which the family is operating and the wider span of influences that may be impacting on the children.

Single agencies will respond to these lessons and the LSCB will receive assurances that these are being implemented.

How we will disseminate and evidence the learning

Dissemination of the Learning	Specific Actions	Subgroup(s) or single agency	Deadline	Expected Impact and how it will be tested
The LSCB will ensure that the lessons identified in this SCR are publicised, included in learning materials and disseminated throughout the practioners in the LSCB	Training materials will be reviewed to ensure the lessons are included.	Learning & Improvement Subgroup	October 2016	<p>Practitioners should use the lessons from this review in their everyday interactions with children, young people and their families</p> <p>The LSCB conducts regular surveys of staff and will include a question to ascertain how well the lessons from this review are known, understood and being addressed in practice.</p>
	Policies and procedures (P&P) will be reviewed to ensure the lessons are included	Policy and Procedures group Subgroup	August 2016	
	The website will be updated to reflect the lessons from this review.	Communications and Engagement Subgroup	August 2016	
	A specific newsletter will be published to cover the lessons from this review and other recent SCR		Sept 2016	
	The LSCB will conduct a number of workshops and a conference to raise the profile of the lessons in this and the other SCR being published.		Through-out 2016-17	
Assurance will be sought from all agencies that the lessons from this SCR are being used – this will be done through the 2016-17 Safeguarding Audit (Section 11)	Performance Management and Quality Assurance Group	May 2017		