

# 01 Background



Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) regularly conducts Serious Case Reviews. They are extensive pieces of work, intended to ensure that we learn from these cases. Since 2016, the LSCB has published 5 SCR full reports or learning briefs. These were called child O (published March 2016), Child LA (December 2016), Child KG (September 2016), child LB (January 2017) and child LD (January 2017). [www.lancshiresafeguarding.org.uk/resources/serious-case-reviews.aspx](http://www.lancshiresafeguarding.org.uk/resources/serious-case-reviews.aspx)

In SCRs, children have either died or been seriously injured, so learning from these situations is important in order to avoid future harm to children. Not all of the children in the most recently published SCRs died, however, in cases where the child did not die, there is likely to be long term impact on the child's wellbeing.

# Why it matters 02



Whilst the cases were diverse, there were themes to learn from:

- Fathers - Working proactively with fathers, ensuring the father is fully involved in the assessment process and in decision making.
- Domestic abuse and mental health - Every professional should understand the importance of screening for domestic abuse disclosure with adults including those with mental health problems.
- Mental health - Consider the impact of parental mental health on the child. 'If professionals do not know what risk a mental health patient poses to those around them then assume it is high'. If you do not have the expertise, find someone who does and consult them.

# 07

## Questions

Have I heard the views of the father, have I made assumptions about the father?

How do we make sure we respond to allegations of domestic abuse?

Are there any of the lessons which I can use to improve our systems or practice?

Do I always know what the child is experiencing?

Have I given the child the opportunity to be heard in a safe environment?

Have I considered the impact of my decisions on the child?

# 03



## Information

- Engaging with parents - In parental disputes, consider the impact on the child of decisions made by the parents. Professional's duty of care to adults should not obscure the responsibility to safeguard children.

# 04

Disengagement, resistance and disguised compliance should be a key consideration when assessing risk to a child. Beware of written agreements. A piece of paper cannot secure a child's safety – ever.

- Age of the child and response to child sexual exploitation – children are children until aged 18 in law.
- Voice of the child – Children should be given the opportunity to have their voices heard in a safe environment as soon as possible and consistently throughout the support.
- Multi-agency working - All assessments should include multi-agency clarification of concerns, the voice of the child and

# 06



## What to do

Reflect on the information in this 7MB.

Discuss with colleagues and...

Take issues to supervision.



clear decision making. Be aware of the risk of missing information if all agencies are not represented. Prior to closing a referral the referrer should be notified to allow for multi-agency discussion and challenge. All practitioners should be familiar with the LSCB guidance – Resolving Professional Disagreement, and have the confidence to use it.

- Use of the CAF, CON and Thresholds Guidance – professionals are reminded to utilise formal processes like the Lancashire Continuum of Need and Threshold Guidance when working jointly on complex cases. Professionals should always provide parents the opportunity to consider a CAF.



# 05