

1 Background and Concerns

Mother has a history of significant mental health issues and from 2010 until 2018 was detained under the Mental Health Act. She was a previous child looked after and both parents had knife related offences. Father was thought to have learning difficulties due to a brain injury in his youth and there had been some concerns regarding mother and her level of cognitive functioning. Mother presented for all of her maternity care. A recommendation was made by the safeguarding midwife that a referral was made to CSC at 16 weeks, this did not take place until after baby was born. The baby was placed in a mother and baby unit in order to assess mothers' ability to meet his needs

2 Purpose of the Review

The purpose of a Line of Sight review is to identify learning for the multi-agency partnership which will strengthen the safeguarding system. Beyond individual cases reviews they also provide a window into wider systems (ways of working/processes) which may need to be changed. In this case it was felt that there was an opportunity for learning and practice improvements in several areas.

3 Key Lines of Enquiry

- To what extent practitioners used professional curiosity to explore mothers' previous experiences and the impact that this could have on parenting capacity
- To what extent father was visible to services and how his parenting capacity was assessed
- To what extent practitioners considered the wider family context
- To what extent covid-19 had an impact on service delivery
- To what extent practitioners triangulated information to make a holistic family assessment
- Agencies confidence around consent/thresholds and safeguarding procedures

7 Further information

- ❖ [Graded Care Profile 2](#)
- ❖ [SCP Training](#)
- ❖ [Line of Sight process](#)
- ❖ [Threshold of Need](#)
- ❖ [Referral Process](#)
- ❖ [SCP Policies & Procedures](#)
- ❖ The Professional Curiosity Tool will be published on the Safer NEL website when complete



4 Key Practice Episodes

Expected /good practice

- Agencies worked well together following baby being born and the referral to CSC being made.
- Baby is safe and in the care of his parents in an assessment placement

Areas for improvement

- Agencies involved in mothers care during pregnancy showed lack of professional curiosity despite them being aware of significant mental health history
- No consideration of father and his parenting ability given that he had been described as having a learning difficulty and had knife related offences
- The pre-birth pathway was not initiated as mother did not give consent to a referral to CSC
- No exploration of wider family dynamics given agencies felt paternal grandmother was controlling
- Lack of continuity of midwife during the antenatal period largely due to covid with mother seeing 9 different midwives in pregnancy
- Lack of information gathering and sharing, agencies failed to triangulate information which led to decision making based on self-reporting and lack of robust assessment
- Lack of understanding around consent, and what mothers lack of consent to a referral to CSC meant in respect of assessed need, thresholds and safeguarding procedures
- There was a gap in the safeguarding support loop between the midwives and safeguarding midwives whereby actions relied on the midwife reporting back to the safeguarding midwife
- There were missed opportunities to explore mothers needs by NAVIGO Plus when she was expressing that she felt she needed additional support

6 Progress/Impact

- An action plan has been developed.
- There is an expectation that agencies will embed learning within their own organisation and assure the SCP that actions have been implemented
- Work has started in agencies in respect of improving the working knowledge of consent, thresholds and safeguarding procedures
- A professional curiosity tool is being developed to support practitioners in how to develop and embed a professionally curious approach to working with children and families
- Awareness raising will be undertaken in respect of agencies understanding of the pre-birth pathway

5 Learning

- There is a need for agencies to communicate with other key agencies as part of any assessment and to triangulate information to inform a holistic assessment
- Children and families would benefit from agencies adopting a professionally curious approach to think family, to explore family history including adverse childhood experiences, family dynamics, to seek evidence and clarification where self-reporting in order to support the assessment of need
- The need for knowledge around consent, thresholds and safeguarding procedures within agencies to be strengthened
- Lack of continuity of care in terms of change in workers (midwives) is not supportive of the ongoing assessment process