

1 Background and Concerns

"Child 28" died suddenly at the age of 14 months. The child lived with siblings (aged 3 years and 2 months) and mother; the family being of white British origin. Mother had known vulnerabilities in her own childhood and had been a victim of domestic abuse, with 3 previous children's social care referrals for her own children, the most recent of which meant the children were subject to a child in need plan. There had been an episode when the older sibling had returned from her father's care with bruising, resulting in an early help intervention. Records indicated concerns relating to missed health appointments for all children, health concerns not being addressed, and advice not followed. The younger sibling was noted as failing to thrive and required hospital admission following the incident.



2 Purpose of the Rapid Review

For agencies involved with the child/family to share information and identify learning when a child has died or experienced serious harm as a result of abuse or neglect. The Review should also consider good practice as well as areas for improvement and a report developed including an action plan.



3 Key Lines of Enquiry

- Was the voice/lived experience of the child heard and understood by agencies involved?
- Did agencies recognise neglect and consider the impact of this on the child/family?
- Did agencies work together as per statutory guidance to safeguard the child/family?
- Was the reason for child 28 and siblings developmental delay understood?



4 Key Practice Episodes

Expected and good practice

- Joint visits were undertaken by Children's Services, including family support and other involved agencies
- Good partnership working and communication between the IDVA, Children's Services, Housing, Acute Trust and Health Visiting team
- Persistent attempts by the hospital to follow up non attended appointments

Areas for improvement

- Limited use of child in need/other multi-agency meetings to share information on children's needs, lived experiences, impact of parenting and interventions required
- Limited assessment of parent's own vulnerability, experiences of neglect and domestic abuse and impact of how they were parented on their own parenting capacity
- Disjointed review of health needs which did not identify a significant pattern of concerns despite many missed health appointments and lack of partnership working
- Minimal consideration relating to the impact on the children of their health needs not being addressed



5 Learning (What needs to be done differently)

- The child's lived experience to be consistently assessed across agencies and shared within key forums to ensure a full understanding of the impact of parenting on meeting the needs of the child
- Domestic abuse to be considered as an enabler for neglect and staff need to understand, recognise, and name neglect for children with numerous vulnerability factors
- Missed health appointments and/or ongoing failure to thrive should be considered together across families and across different services in the context of indicators of neglect: where a service is concerned, they should share information and seek further support or advice
- Staff should utilise the Neglect toolkit to inform their assessment when they identify any neglect indicators and staff should access the Neglect training
- Parental engagement with the child's plan must be evidenced, to include an assessment of the impact of this on the child needs being met



6 Progress/Impact

- The Early Help Strategy has been revised and launched
- The Neglect Strategy has been launched with a clear plan to embed this across NEL
- The Neglect Toolkit has been published
- Neglect training is being delivered across agencies
- Neglect Champions are being recruited in agencies to embed the work and ensure staff remain alert to the negative impact of neglect



7 Further information

- [Neglect Strategy](#)
- [Safeguarding Children Partnership Training](#)
- [SCP Threshold Document](#)
- [Professional Curiosity Tool](#)
- <https://www.safernel.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/NEL-Neglect-Screening-Tool-1.docx>
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#)

