

Serious Case Review

6 Step Briefing

Child Ai

The Background

This young person had an altercation with one of the group of young men subsequently convicted of his murder a couple of days before the incident happened when Child Ai was killed.

Safeguarding Concerns

All the young people involved in the criminal investigation were Care Leavers. They were all separately known to the Police, but there is no evidence to suggest there was any criminal link between them prior to this incident.

The Incident

Child Ai had been in an altercation with one of the group convicted of his murder. It appears this young person rallied support with acquaintances and then saw Child Ai a couple of days later when the previous argument then escalated. Sadly Child Ai was fatally injured as a result of this.

The Review

The Serious Case Review Sub Group reviewed the information and initially recommended a proportionate Serious Case Review, focusing on gang activity as a link between the young people involved. At the initial Serious Case Review Panel it became clear that there was no gang link or criminal link between the young people; however, there was learning for agencies.

A Case Mapping Exercise workshop took place to identify learning for individual agencies and three recommendations were agreed. A proposal was put to the Independent Chair of the NSCB, who agreed with Panel's decision.

The Findings

Safeguarding Children's Services

- When considering placements, the demography of the area should be carefully considered (This reflects findings from T Family thematic review; can we link the two?)
- If a young person is going to be moved to independent living at the age of 18, is there an assessment to identify it actually in their best interests? An example of how this was not appropriate relates to one of the young people convicted in this case who was struggling in a residential placement before moving to independent living, with less support available.
- It was identified that many Care Leavers get their first jobs at places like McDonalds and it was queried about whether this was appropriate, taking into account that this type of establishments acts as a meeting place for young people and may potentially put Care Leavers in risky environments. Perhaps the young people should be given awareness of working in these types of establishments rather than discourage employment (See attached e-mail for further exploration of this).
- Social Workers do not consistently understand the risks, mental health issues or impact on a young person of the use and effects of cannabis.

Commissioning

- The Placements Team, Police and Youth Offending Service have started mapping all placements in Northamptonshire to understand the demography of the area young people are placed in. It would be good practice for this to continue.

The Findings continued

Youth Offending Service (YOS)

- Three young people associated with this case were known to YOS. They were all highly dependent on cannabis. It was extremely difficult to work with them as they were often heavily under the influence of the drug.
- The three young people all had a history of using weapons and a history of offending – more work needs to be undertaken in schools about the use of weapons and the dangers and risks they pose.

Northamptonshire Virtual Schools

- Many of the young people seen through this service had low confidence, low self-esteem, constant rejection and poor emotional wellbeing. There are links to how young people feel about themselves and drug misuse.
- If young people were empowered to understand more about trauma and attachment disorder, perhaps they would not be so negative about themselves and perhaps their drug use would reduce.
- In terms of education, training and employment, there is a proposal for Advisors to be deployed into teams to educate Social Workers with skills and knowledge to help them to manage difficult young people.
- Post 16 education plans have improved' however, further work needs to be undertaken to ensure the voice of the young person is clearly heard.

GP Services

- LAC need to be more visible within GP practices and a Specialist Nurse for CiC is preparing guidance to support GPs.
- Consideration is being given to having a key person within each practice who can co-ordinate care of CiC registered at their practice.
- GPs do not have enough awareness or knowledge around the nature of gang activity and the impact this can have on individuals and their families. Training for all GPs is being looked into.

Clinical Commissioning Groups

- Disengagement of young people as they move through adolescence is apparent.
- Diagnosis of ADHD is too readily used to account for all the difficulties a young person may be experiencing and professionals do not consider the underlying cause of behaviours.
- Young people may find the ADHD "label" stigmatising and may reject both label and medication.
- Consideration of ADHD tends to be parent-led, there needs to be a focus on engaging young people at the earliest opportunity to hear their voices and understand their views and feelings.
- It would be useful to take a multi-disciplinary approach to look at the data population for CiC and start identifying those most vulnerable. Whilst Health should lead on this, it should be undertaken with Youth Offending and Safeguarding Children's Services.

Police

- Educate schools regarding their need to step up and address violence and knife crimes (See attached e-mail sent yesterday to various parties which needs to challenge all partners to action).

Recommendations

1. Careful consideration of geographic area should be given when placing young people into allocated independent living in Northamptonshire, with appropriate supervision and guidance available to them.
2. Professionals across the partnership need greater awareness and understanding of knife crime in the county. This should be led on by Police but should include all partners, especially education and health colleagues.

Good Practice and Evidence as a result of this Review and similar Review

A better matching process for placements has been introduced and these have to be signed off by the young person's Social Worker.

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