

# 7 Minute Briefing: Themes from SCRs

Date: 22 February 2021

## 7. THINK ABOUT

- Which themes show up in your practice?
- What do you need to do to improve your work with families?
- What are some the challenges that you commonly experience when working with other services and how can these be resolved?
- How can you use published Serious Case Reviews and Local Child Safeguarding Reviews to reflect on your work with children and families and to improve the quality of your practice?

## 1. BACKGROUND

Serious Case Reviews (SCR) are commissioned when a child who is known to our services dies or is seriously harmed. SCRs are important because help us understand what needs to be done to improve how we work.

This briefing organises the learning from 13 SCRs into key themes. The aim is that the learning is shared; that practice is improved, and children experience better outcomes.

## 2. FORMS OF HARM

the cases reviewed in this report included children subject to a range of safeguarding risks and including:

- Neglect
  - Domestic Abuse including coercive control
  - Engaging Challenging Families
  - Sexual abuse
  - Parental mental health
  - Parental substance misuse
  - Cumulative harm
  - Adolescent vulnerability
- Learning domains include:



## 6. WHAT TO DO

- Read and share the briefing with colleagues
- Discuss the learning in your teams
- Use the learning in supervision and 1-2-1s
- Reflect on your practice – identify areas for your learning and improvement

## 5. PARENTAL FACTORS

**Parental capacity:** it is important to ensure that parenting is consistently good enough

**Domestic Abuse:** Seven reviews detailed domestic abuse including coercive control. This included trying to control professionals

**Disguised compliance:** false compliance needs to be named and challenged – parents do what is required to keep children safe.

**Parental mental health:** This was the most prevalent parental characteristic reported in these SCRs.

**Avoidance and Resistance:** Practitioners must quickly understand what is driving the hostility and aggression and formulate a child-centred, protective response.

## 4. PRACTICE ISSUES

**Professional curiosity:** having a stance of respectful scepticism and remaining open about the possibility of harm to children

**Authoritative Practice:** understand professional power, use it judiciously, work with clients and other professionals with sensitivity, empathy; bottom-line focus on children.

**Multiple referrals and re-referrals:** not meeting thresholds for targeted or specialist support meant that opportunities were missed to safeguard the child

**Assessment & Planning:** must be focused on improving outcomes for children and evidencing sustained improvement

**Escalation & professional dissent:** should be managed in a timely effective way that reduces delays and safeguards children



## 3. CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCE

**Children's lived experience:** The voice and lived experience of the child is key

**Neglect:** neglect was not seen as an urgent safeguarding concern

**Child sexual abuse:** practitioners need to understand sexual abuse & move beyond disclosures

**Cumulative harm:** Need greater understanding of ACES multiple harm

**Adolescent vulnerability:** all practitioners need to be aware of history including family functioning and the potential impact of ACES and trauma