

## **Progress report on the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews**

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Cabinet Member: Frances Nicholson

Division and Local Member: All (county-wide implications)

### **1. Summary**

1.1 Under new guidance, *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)*, the three statutory safeguarding partners have a shared and equal duty to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in the local area. Serious Case Reviews have been replaced under new guidance with rapid reviews, which in some cases lead to local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews where it is judged that there is additional learning.

1.2 Two local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews were published in August 2021 relating to non-accidental injuries to very young children. Since the inception of both reviews in spring 2020, the SSCP has been committed to implementing the learning relating to more effective identification of risks to children in the pre-birth period, better support to fathers and male carers, and improved communication across agencies.

### **1.3 Links to County Plan**

1.3 Although the responsibility to promote the welfare of and safeguard children no longer rests solely with Somerset County Council, safeguarding activity links the SSCP to the County Vision of partnership working for the benefit of children and families, with a focus on those most in need of safeguarding to promote the best possible outcomes.

### **2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations**

2.1 The Scrutiny for Policies for Children and Families Committee is asked to note:

- 1. The process for rapid reviews and local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.**
- 2. The learning from the two local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews published in August 2021, Child Alex and Child Charlie.**

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 The three Somerset safeguarding partners (Somerset County Council, Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group, and Avon and Somerset Constabulary) now constitute the tripartite Somerset Children's Safeguarding Partnership. The new safeguarding arrangements took effect on 29 September 2019. Rapid reviews and local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, where necessary, replace Serious Case Reviews where there has been a significant safeguarding incident. Rapid reviews, which are the first stage of learning from significant incidents of harm, and local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, (where commissioned), are overseen locally by the SSCP Executive group, as well as nationally by the Child Safeguarding Practice Review panel.

### **4. Consultations undertaken**

- 4.1 Both families of the children subject to the local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews published in August 2021 were invited to give their views on the multi-agency services they received. All but Child Alex's biological father declined involvement, and his comments were incorporated into the review.

### **5. Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs)**

- 5.1 **Rapid review process:** The rapid review process, set out in *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)* as the first stage of learning, must be completed within 15 days of a significant incident of harm and is designed to elicit learning and action at the earliest opportunity. Where there is additional learning outside this 15-day process, a local Child Safeguarding Practice Review may be commissioned.
- 5.2 Two local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews were published in August 2021 – Child Alex and Child Charlie. These have given strategic direction to the partnership in strengthening the safeguarding system to protect babies and very young children. Both reviews relate to non-accidental injuries to babies.
- 5.3 Implementation of the learning commenced at the rapid review stage, and early findings were shared in the SSCP Forum online events week in December 2020 and again in June 2021. Feedback from the national Child Safeguarding Practice Review panel in August 2021 commended the reviews for their clarity, brevity, and readability, as well as analysis and helpful learning points identified.
- 5.4 In early November 2021, the SSCP will hold three further online sessions, including a twilight session, to disseminate learning, mainly to frontline practitioners. Themes that emerged include better identification of vulnerabilities within families in the pre-birth period, and improved support for fathers/male carers. The next Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership Forum week, planned for December 2021, will have a running theme of improved support to fathers/male carers.

5.5 **Local Child Safeguarding Practice Thematic Review, 2021:** A further thematic review is underway within the SSCP. The partnership has not yet undertaken a thematic review under the new Child Safeguarding Practice Review arrangements, and therefore this review is at an early stage of development. The partnership will seek to involve families, should they wish to participate in the review.

## 6. Background papers

6.1 The [local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews](#) published in August 2021 are available on the following links: -

Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review, Child Alex [CSPR-Alex-final-version-Somerset-July-2021.pdf \(safeguardingsomerset.org.uk\)](#)

Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review, Child Charlie [CSPR-Charlie-Final-Somerset-July-2021.pdf \(safeguardingsomerset.org.uk\)](#)

**Note:** For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author.