

## 01. BACKGROUND

The South Tees Safeguarding Partnership commissioned a child safeguarding practice review (CSPR) to consider systems and practice within and between partner agencies in the South Tees area specifically with regard to the neglect. The headline learning was in regard to knowing and considering the parent's history and vulnerabilities, recognising and understanding the causes of neglect, pre-birth assessment, involving fathers, the role of pathways workers, professional challenge and impact of COVID 19.

## 02. WHAT DID WE LOOK AT?

The review looked in detail at two children in different families that met the criteria for a CSPR. The children are to be known as Lucy and Mia. Lucy was two years old when she was injured in an accident that may have been contributed to by parental neglect. Her mother was receiving support as a care leaver and Lucy was on a child in need (CIN) plan at the time of the incident. Mia was less than a month old when she died. The cause of death is not yet known. Mia was on a child protection plan (CPP) due to neglect concerns for her older siblings. Her father misuses a number of drugs and is on a treatment programme.

## 03. KEY LEARNING

1. When assessing if children require additional support or if they are at risk, it is important to always consider the parent's history and on-going vulnerabilities and the impact on the children.
2. A pre-birth social work assessment should be undertaken in cases where there are predisposing risks and vulnerabilities that warrant involvement from children's social care. This includes if there is involvement with the parent or other children in the immediate family. All professionals need to be aware of this procedure and should challenge a lack of assessment. If no assessment is to be undertaken when the parent is receiving a service from Pathways, as could be appropriate, there is a need to have clear reasons recorded about why this is the case.
3. Clarity is required regarding the roles of all professionals involved with a family and assumptions should not be made. If a parent is receiving support from a Pathways worker, this does not mean they will be providing support to the care leaver's child or specifically monitoring their wellbeing. They may have no contact with the child.
4. It is important that professionals understand the need to meaningfully consider and involve fathers in assessments and plans in respect of their children.

## 07. WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW?

1. Think about the learning from this review and the children and families you work with. Do you need to think differently?
2. Access and make the most of training and supervision.
3. Contribute to multiagency meetings, if you think the case is drifting, voice your concern.
4. Find out more by reading the full review when published on the STSCP website <https://stscp.co.uk>

## 06. WHAT WILL WE DO NOW?

The STSCP is currently reviewing its Neglect Strategy and will relaunch it shortly.

Cooperation with the Corporate Parenting Board to discuss the concept of 'Corporate Grandparents' to encourage a more positive view of support when care leavers have children of their own.

Consideration is being given to how they can ensure that a child's father is always considered and involved.

Communication with all statutory partners & relevant agencies with a view to establishing the use of the Graded Care Profile and what systems they presently have in place.

## CSPR Kingfisher

 South Tees  
Safeguarding  
Children Partnership

## 05. RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1: The STSCP to consider how it can ensure that all professionals in partner agencies are aware of and use the neglect strategy. This should involve a review of the strategy, consideration of how to relaunch it and how to monitor its use.
- R2: The STSCP to request assurance from the Local Authority regarding improvements in the use of the Graded Care Profile and evidence based practice in neglect cases, to include consideration of its use by professionals across other relevant partner agencies.
- R3: All plans, be they early help, child in need or child protection, need to provide a clear and detailed description of who is undertaking what work with the family, which takes their role and its limitations into consideration. All members of any team around a child / core group must ensure they provide appropriate challenge if this is not the case.
- R4: The Corporate Parenting Board to be asked to consider how they can develop the concept of being a positive 'corporate grandparent' to the children of care leavers.
- R5: The STSCP to consider how it can ensure that the recommendations made in the STORK review, regarding the need to actively involve fathers when providing services to children, are having a positive impact to the children of South Tees.

## 04. WHAT ARE THE MAIN THINGS WE FOUND: PROFESSIONALS

1. Professionals need to use specific neglect tools and ensure that they understand the root causes of neglect and the impact on a child over time.
2. There is a need for transparent and sensitive management of auditing activity in local authorities with improvement plans. There also needs to be a system in place to consider the outcome of actions from audits to ensure they have achieved what was required.
3. Professionals need to be supported to robustly challenge themselves, each other and parents/carers when it comes to managing cases of neglect.
4. Covid-19 has led to additional challenges locally for this complex area of safeguarding for example face to face meetings.