



Foreword to the Serious Case Review (SCR) - Child C

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This SCR was commissioned by the Independent Chair of Shropshire's Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) following the death of Child C who presented to services as an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child (UASC), and was suspected to have been trafficked into the UK.

Child C went missing from his foster care placement within days of being placed. He remained as a missing person, believed to have been within the West Midlands area until he was found deceased in Derbyshire.

This serious case review was commissioned to identify any lessons that the agencies involved could learn in order to improve practice and better improve their services to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in the future.

During the review process it was established that Child C was in fact an adult being 21 years of age.

It is important to note that prior to this case Shropshire had no or very little previous experience for a case such as this. Since that time significant improvements have been made across agencies which have been evidenced most recently through an SSCB multi-agency audit of safeguarding practice in respect of a number of UASC's who subsequently presented in Shropshire. 6 cases were audited with 5 being graded as 'Good' and 1 graded as 'Outstanding'.

The SCR overview report makes a number of recommendations for the agencies involved in Child C's care - for Shropshire's Safeguarding Children Board, and for the government – and does report on some of the improvements which have already been made to practice.

Whilst acknowledging the work of the Independent Reviewer in respect of this review, as has been indicated, SSCB is of the opinion that because the case dates back to 2016 not all of the improvements in practice have been included. In addition SSCB has identified a number of additional specific learning points for action over and above those recommended in the report.

This covering report outlines the progress made specifically in relation to the improvements in service that have been made by Children's Social Care:

- Policies and Procedures have been updated to reflect the learning from this case.
- Significant improvements in the timeliness of assessments with assurance being provided to SSCB.
- The introduction of a UASC Team/Worker who has become a subject matter expert and has built good relationships with these young people contributing to good outcomes for them.
- All trafficked children are now referred to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).
- Commissioned Service with Refugee Action to provide additional support to UASC's and trafficked young people.

Additional National Recommendation:

On considering the final report SSCB identified that an additional national recommendation was required in order to keep UASC's safer at the earliest opportunity. The recommendation is as follows:

- National guidance should be issued to clarify how Police and Local Authorities work together and agree on who takes primacy in the identification and confirmation of age of a person who presents as a UASC.

SSCB are actively exploring this with the National Panel, the Home Office and the National Crime Agency to establish clarity on what processes currently exist and how gaps in that process should be closed.

The learning from this SCR will continue to inform the on-going development of safeguarding systems and practice in Shropshire. A multi-agency action plan has been developed which covers actions against all of the recommendations in the final report. The SSCB Learning and Improvement sub-group will continue to monitor the multi-agency action plan and seek assurance from individual agencies that improvements have been made to safeguard this vulnerable group of young people.