



Learning & Improvement Briefing 14

SSCB Serious Case Review – Child C

November 2018

A Serious Case Review published on 7th November 2018 was commissioned 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.

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.

Lessons learned:

This review has identified a number of issues concerning agencies' awareness of the indicators of trafficking and associated risks, their assessment of young people who present as unaccompanied asylum seekers, the management of risk in cases where children remain missing for a long time and the impact of a child's status on how they are managed and reviewed.

Examples of improved practice include the following; photographs are now taken of all young people on admission to care, an emergency response plan is now in place to be implemented in the event of a large number of unaccompanied young asylum seekers arriving at the same time, photographs, DNA and fingerprints are taken by West Mercia Police as part of the custody procedure, weekly intelligence sharing meetings are being held with partners from West Mercia Police on children missing from care and contact has been made with relevant embassies to locate the families of these children.

Similarly, since the period of the review, West Mercia Police have implemented a new set of policies and procedures on Clandestine Entry into the UK and have trained staff in their application.

West Midlands Police have implemented a new policy and procedure for managing the transfer of missing person's investigations. This includes an agreement between Duty Inspectors and an escalation procedure in the event of disagreement.



Shropshire Council Children's Services have altered their systems to enable the Emergency Duty Team to add records and have improved the communication systems between the local teams and the Emergency Duty Team to enable more effective care planning.

Shropshire Council Children's Services now maintain the looked after status of missing children who are unaccompanied asylum seekers and hold statutory reviews in accordance with national guidance.

As this case dates back to 2016 not all of the improvements made in practice have been reflected in the final report. Additional improvements in practice have been made specifically in relation to the service provided by Children's Social Care which include:

- 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.

A recent SSCB multi-agency audit of 6 UASC cases evidenced the impact of a number of these improvements with 5 cases being graded as 'Good' and 1 graded as 'Outstanding'.

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.

The foreword and overview report in respect of Child C can be viewed on the [Learning and Improvement page](#) for professionals on the SSCB website.