



Norfolk Safeguarding  
Children Board

# **Learning from Serious Case Reviews**

## **Case M**

# Serious Case Review: Case M Introduction

- Case M, was previously conducted as a Multi-Agency Review, Child J, but the recommendations were not implemented effectively.
- Case involved four children:
  - Two boys, a girl, and a younger brother
  - Four different fathers
  - History of abusive relationships
  - At the time of the MAR the father of the youngest son lived with the family



# Case M & The MAR – Child J

## Case of sibling CSA

- Child J, aged 7, was abused by her older brother (13), and disclosed this to her mother.
- This happened again after a few months had passed, and then again when J was aged 10.
- At this point, her brother (17) had been having penetrative sex with her for several months.



# Case M:

## Patterns identified 2012 - 2013

- A high threshold for moving to CP Conferences and CP Plans
- An assumption of reunification of the abuser into the family
- Failing to treat both the abuser and victim as children (as per *Working Together*)
- A child with a disability as part of the sibling group



# Case M: Patterns 2012 – 2013, cont.

- Use of unrealistic and ineffectual written agreements with parents
- Lack of formal assessment of parenting capacity
- Mother's anxiety and poor mental health
- A tolerance of poor parenting



# Case M: From MAR to SCR

- Child J report taken to Board in March 2013
- Case re-referred to SCRG in 2014, following second incident of CSA within the family by a different brother in Feb 2013. SCR commissioned, resulting in two separate reports as reflected in the Terms of Reference:
  - **Overview Report: Focus on the practice in relation to this case**, i.e. what happened to the children and how effective were agencies in protecting them from harm: **the extent to which the abuse could have been predicted and/or prevented**
  - **Barriers to Learning Report- The organisational response:** why did protective arrangements not happen following the MAR?



# Case M: the SCR

- Core assessment completed in Jan 2013: children no longer on CP plan for CSA.
- In Feb 2013 a second brother abused the sister
- Strategy meetings, conferences and core group meetings reflect ongoing concerns about the mother's parenting capacity and disputes between professionals on how to handle the case.



# Case M: the SCR, cont.

- Therapy and support arranged for the mother and two younger siblings
- Second son accommodated under section 20. Eldest boy has no contact with the family and the second son is increasingly isolated
- As care proceedings continue there is divided opinion between whether it is in the children's best interest to stay with mother
- Children express considerable anxiety about care arrangements and worry for their mum



# Case M: the SCR, cont.

- Judge stated that he felt that it was correct that there had been a contested hearing and commended the assessment and input of the Social Worker (SW5).
- He had however, been impressed by the evidence given by the children's mother and had given due weight to the views of the children.
- He decided that the removal of the children would not be in their interests and directed CSC to compile a plan of support within the community
- He also ordered a 12 month Supervision Order and intensive support.



# Case M:

## Overcoming Barriers to Learning

- Dissemination process was good but was less effective than hoped for: not all professionals were included or able to attend, and the fact that the MAR was not published made it difficult for managers to know what they could share with whom.
- The **culture within Norfolk CSC was not conducive to effective learning**, the Ofsted inspection diverted resources from implementing the recommendations so some of the structural aspects that needed to be put in place to support practice were delayed.



# Case M & Child Sexual Abuse

- The change of categorisation of CP Plan following the removal of the first boy led to a change in the perception of risk
- The professionals disagreed about the mother's parenting capacity and her ability to protect the children in her care

## Systemic Learning

- How well do we work with parents in addressing the risks and presentation of CSA within the family?



# Case M: Recommendations

## **Across two reports, total of 16 recommendations:**

- Resolving Professional Disagreements
- Health (GP) engagement with multi-agency meetings
- Managing case transfers
- CSA training – including making links to domestic abuse
- Use of Disclosure Policy
- Strengthen the Review Process, including dissemination of learning
- NSCB should assure itself that the current arrangements for all the children are reviewed and demonstrably provide effective support, safeguarding and protection.



# Case M: Discuss



IF YOU'VE BEEN SEXUALLY ABUSED, YOU DON'T HAVE TO HIDE IT ANY MORE.

Childline  
0800 1111



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**If you have any questions about  
Norfolk Safeguarding Children Board's  
Serious Case Reviews**

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