



Norfolk Safeguarding
Children Board

Learning from Serious Case Reviews

Case O

Serious Case Review: Case O Introduction

- Case involves seven children who were subjected to chronic neglect, some physical abuse and – it later transpired – sexual abuse.
- A historic and retrospective case: the family moved from Norfolk to Southampton in summer 2011 and it was there that the extent of abuse was exposed
- The case was referred to Norfolk by Southampton LSCB, who were conducting an SCR in response to their own failings to protect the children.



Norfolk Safeguarding
Children Board

Case O: Key Features of the Case.

Family O was known to Norfolk agencies between 2004 & 2011

- The children lived with both their parents, first on a travellers site and then in settled social housing
- There were recurring concerns about neglect and physical abuse of the children
- Some of the children had Statements of Special Educational Needs
- The father was known to have mental health needs
- There was evidence of domestic abuse
- There were a number of referrals and assessments but no substantial, continuing involvement by the local authority



Norfolk Safeguarding
Children Board

Case O Key Features of the Case

- Sep 2004, the first contact was made with Children's Services: an Early Years support worker reported concerns about the children's 'frozen watchfulness'.
- The threshold for intervention was not met.
- By middle of 2005 more agencies were involved: the older two children had started at school and the mother was expecting Child 5. Concerns included:
 - Children's speech and developmental delay (schools)
 - The father's intimidating behaviour (midwives and HVs)
- In July 2005 the father jumped off a bridge: an impulsive act of self harm



Norfolk Safeguarding
Children Board

Case O Key Features of the Case, cont.

- Between 2006 and 2007, family moved into settled housing and the children changed schools twice.
- School noted concern about Child 1's obsessive behaviours
- Child 7 was born in 2008
- Concerns were mounting and in Feb 2008 a strategy meeting was called, but police were not invited.
- Decision to conduct core assessment was reversed: insufficient concerns. CSC took no further action.
- Family experienced some racial harassment.
- In 2008 the family made a final move and the children settled into a school until their move to Southampton. It was here that the three oldest children were statemented.



Norfolk Safeguarding
Children Board

Case O Key Features of the Case, cont.

Between 2008 and 2011 the father had 44 contacts with mental health services.

From 2009 the school kept a detailed log of their safeguarding concerns and made several referrals.

The parents marriage was deteriorating and family life was increasingly chaotic leading up to the move to Southampton.

Despite repeated referrals from a number of agencies, a Core Assessment was never completed.



Norfolk Safeguarding
Children Board

Case O: Neglect and domestic abuse

Recognising that this was a historical case, the SCR Panel were asked about what had changed since 2011.

What issues remain relevant?

Systemic Learning:

- What are the barriers for maintaining an overview of the needs of all children in large, chaotic families?
- To what extent do we lose sight of the children when faced with multiple issues, including domestic abuse, mental health issues and the cultural barriers of working with travelling families?



Case O: Recommendations

Case O concluded with 8 recommendations around:

- Norfolk Children’s Services demonstrate improved standards in social care
- Full multi-agency involvement in CP arrangements
- Establishing a core standard for supervision
- Use of Resolving Professional Disagreement policy
- Strengthen arrangements for children affected by DA
- Raise the profile of particular safeguarding needs of children from travelling communities.
- NHS Mental Health Trust to demonstrate safeguarding response to children when working with adults
- Improve transfer of SEN records



Case O: Discuss



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

Please contact us on:

nscb@norfolk.gov.uk

01603 228966

Follow us on Twitter: @NorfolkLSCB

