



## **The West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership**

### **Response to Serious Case Review (SCR) – Child S**

In 2016 child S, aged 7 months suffered life changing injuries whilst in the care of their parents. Toxicology reports found traces of cocaine and amphetamines in the child's system.

A serious case review (SCR) was commissioned by West Sussex Safeguarding Children Board (WSSCB), which is now called West Sussex Safeguarding Children's Partnership (WSSCP) and concluded in late 2017. Publication was delayed due to the on-going criminal proceedings which concluded in spring 2023.

The author of the independent review looked at interactions from multiple agencies with the parents prior to this tragic incident. Until the incident in 2016 professionals believed that child S was well cared for.

The independent reviewer's analysis highlighted professionals acted upon the information available, and how the mother and father had presented to them. However, there are learning points from the review for the agencies involved and changes which should happen because of this.

There were some examples of good practice whereby several agencies demonstrated they are getting the basics right, including: a toxicology test was undertaken swiftly at hospital, there was a positive child protection response and appropriate escalation of concern by one agency.

The WSSCB fully accepted the findings and learning arising from the serious case review and took actions to address its recommendations.

A review was undertaken which ensured that midwives at the former Brighton and Sussex University Trust had mobile access to computers in order for them to complete required tasks.

Training was delivered across the Partnership to support professionals to maintain curiosity, 'ask the second question,' and be confident to question others and escalate where appropriate.

The Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures have up to date guidance for professionals on information sharing. The WSSCP's Improvement and Assurance Group

undertakes a rolling programme of audits which look at how professionals work together to share information.

The Pan Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures were also revised to ensure there is clarity about the response to a Brief Resolved Unexpected Event (BRUE).

Learning from this review was delivered in a variety of ways. This included face to face events, whereby 300 Children's Services practitioners undertook training on the role of men in safeguarding and dissemination of a learning briefing. During safeguarding events, presentations on the potential impact on child safeguarding around parental substance misuse and mental health were delivered by subject matter experts.

The findings and the learning from this review has been shared with all agencies.