



## Serious Case Review W

### Learning Handout

#### Background:

Serious Case Review W concerns two children who experienced life-long difficulties due to the care given to them by their family and the lack of effective intervention by professionals. Both children had been the subject of child in need plans and child protection plans under the category of neglect.

#### The Review found:

These children were not “invisible” to services; they and the adults in their lives were well known to universal services including mental health, some of them to the police and probation and the children went to nursery and then to school. There was also an issue of alcohol use and abuse through this family but was never identified as a risk factor and addressed.

#### Key Theme 1:

##### Effectively Identifying and Tackling Neglect in a Timely Way

Workers found the challenge of neglect extremely difficult and frustrating. Measuring evidence of progress can often be slow with no quick solutions and there are sometimes differences of opinion as to whether the care provided by parents and wider family is good enough.

##### How to Think About This in Your Practice:

We know that neglectful families can be chaotic and difficult to access and in this particular case there was a lack of urgency in responding to the children’s needs. As a result, a partnership Neglect Working Group was established to ensure that practice is improved across all agencies. This Working Group has focussed on developing the partnership Neglect Strategy, which includes new toolkits for multi-agency professionals and a mandatory toolkits for social workers that focuses on understanding the child’s lived experience and supports in developing an analysis around neglect.

Click on the link below to view the mandatory tools for social workers and additional resources for partner agencies;

[Children's Social Care and Wider Workforce tools and resources to help identify and tackle neglect.](#)

The Neglect Strategy is clear about good practice and expectations for professionals working with vulnerable children and has additional information which can be accessed using the link below;

[WSSCP Neglect Strategy 2020-2023](#)

## Key Theme 2:

### **Professionals were blocked by the fact that the parents and wider family members loved their children.**

It can be difficult for workers to separate the concerns they have from the love they may observe between a parent and their child/ren. There is often a professional optimism whereby workers want to believe that circumstances will improve, and families will turn a situation around. This can delay professionals responding in a timely and effective way.

### **How to Think About This in Your Practice:**

Discussing the case with a manager, using the tools and resources to support and challenge your thinking as well as being reflective about a case within supervision or with a colleague, are all ways to ensure you are making the most effective decisions for that child in order to keep them safe. It is important to be professionally curious with families as well as professionals. Read more about [Professional Curiosity](#) here. Multi-agency discussions also enable different perspectives and promote professional challenge. It is important to provide both support and challenge during discussions with colleagues and know when to escalate a concern you may have regarding a decision that has been made that is potentially unsafe for the child. You can read more about professional disagreements and concerns in the [WSSCP Escalation Policy](#).

## Key Theme 3:

### **Maintaining a Child Centred Approach**

It was seen within this Serious Case Review, that at times the focus was on the adults rather than the lived experiences of the children and this information was often missed out of assessments and analysis and therefore did not contribute to safeguarding plans.

### **How to Think About This in Your Practice:**

Make sure you keep the child at the focus of your mind and ask the question "what is life like for this child?" It is important to consider the impact on the child and ensure the needs of the parents do not overshadow these. Find out more about [a child centred approach and focusing on the needs and views of the child](#) (pages 8 and 27). Using the tools and resources identified above in Key Theme 1 will help workers to focus their thinking and work on the impact on the child/ren.

## Training on Neglect

Click for more information on [WSSCP Neglect Training](#)