

Serious Case Review Learning Bulletin –

Baby A

This learning bulletin outlines the learning from the Overview Report for Baby A that was published by SSCB on 27th February 2018. The SSCB expects that this bulletin will be used by every team in every setting to review the team’s practice against the learning, identify what the team needs to do and engage actively in transforming practice.

Serious Case Review Learning Bulletin

Baby A

Theme of SCR	Vulnerability of babies, risks of parental alcohol misuse, risks to children and babies of dogs and pets in the home, the importance of establishing safe sleeping and care arrangements for babies
Date Published	Tuesday 27 th February 2018
Case details:	
Family History	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The family is White British with English being their first language• Baby A was the youngest of four children born over a period of eight years• MA and FA had been a couple for approximately ten years• Mum lived in the family home with the 3 youngest children• Children were in receipt of universal education and health services and contact was with Mum as the main carer• Family only known to Children's Social Care for one incident where Mum hit Baby A's sibling in front of professionals• Oldest child lived with maternal grandparents which was only known post incident• Dad had long term alcohol and drug use• Mum and maternal grandparents had long term drug use• No concerns or issues with older siblings• Mum fully engaged with school around siblings• FA was initially charged with Neglecting a Child so as to Cause Unnecessary Injury contrary to Sec.1 of the Children and Young Person's Act 1933, as well as being a person in charge of a dog dangerously out of control, causing injury resulting in death contrary to Sec.3 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991• FA was convicted of the second offence with the first offence laying on file	
Baby A	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Born 2015• Youngest of four children• Lived with Mum and 2 older siblings• Died aged 20 days old following an assault by the family pet dog• Died from the severity of the injuries caused by the attack• Inquest concluded Baby A died of torso injuries• Narrative verdict at Inquest – "Baby A was a vulnerable infant entirely dependent on the adults in his life to protect him from significant harm, provide care and a safe environment. There was a gross failure to provide this in the early hours of 20 June 2015 resulting in Baby A's death"	
Key Points of Learning:	
Indicators of risk and vulnerability:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vulnerable baby unsupervised at the time of the incident• Safe sleep arrangements not in place at time of incident• Pet dog not supervised at time of attack	

- Dad had long term alcohol and drug dependency
- Mum aware of Dad's dependency on alcohol and drugs
- Dad was carer at time of incident and not in a fit state to provide safe care - FA had stated that he was asleep while the attack occurred
- Contingency plan in place due to family crisis was not robust or safe

Findings from the Review

1. Many families carry vulnerabilities and pressures not known to professional agencies which may increase risk. It is therefore vitally important to ask the right questions whilst impressing upon families the consequences of not addressing issues that may become a risk to their children
2. No one risk factor led to the death of Baby A, but a combination of alcohol misuse and the resultant impairment of judgement, the presence of a dog with a vulnerable baby and an unforeseen family crisis that meant usual family caring arrangements were adjusted. An unexpected crisis in the life of a family is often a time when otherwise managed vulnerabilities become exposed, and in this case, fatal risk developed at an unstoppable pace
3. Professionals need to help families to think about unthinkable risks that may be posed by family pets to children and the need to educate both parents about the risks of alcohol to the safe care of their children

Recommendations for SSCB

1. The SSCB will work with key stakeholders and partners, including Public Health, to deliver public awareness raising campaign around the potential risks to babies and children as a result of:
 - Parental use of alcohol which compromises their ability to safeguard their children
 - Dogs who are not properly supervised by their owners or caretakers

This campaign will run during [Child Safety Week](#) which takes place in the week beginning 5th June 2018.

2. The SSCB will undertake a multi-agency audit in July 2018 to evaluate how effectively the learning from this Review and from the public awareness campaign have been embedded into frontline practice.
3. The SSCB will raise awareness of the need for taxi drivers to be vigilant and report concerns for children's welfare when transporting alcohol to adults who may be parents or caretakers. This will be undertaken through contributing to the annual safeguarding training for Sunderland licensed taxi drivers 2018-2019.

The Overview Report was published on 27th February 2018 at 1pm.
The report and accompanying documents can be accessed at [SSCB SCRs and Documents](#)