



Learning Lessons from Case and Serious Case Reviews re: Vulnerable Babies Multi Agency Staff Briefing note

Sunderland Safeguarding Children Board has undertaken/is undertaking a number of reviews into babies over the last 18 months. These reviews were in respect of vulnerable babies but **the learning is applicable to all work with children, young people, and their families**. Please use this information as a check list to reflect on how effectively you are working with families.

Key learning from the reviews:

- ❑ **Get the basics right** – do you really know who lives with the child or stays at/visits the family home?
- ❑ The **unborn baby procedures**¹ must be followed in all pre-birth cases so that early assessment and planning better protects the baby– are you implementing the unborn baby procedures robustly?
- ❑ The **child must be the focus of the work** – how well do you know the children/young people you are working with?
- ❑ The absence of the **father/father figures** in the child's life – do you know who this is and have you assessed the risk/protection this person presents?
- ❑ A **robust multi agency assessment** is essential to quality decision making and planning – is your work with a family based on a robust assessment?
- ❑ **Family History** is important – do you use chronologies to identify patterns of parenting and behaviour to predict future patterns of parenting and behaviour?
- ❑ The importance of **real parental engagement** with plans – is the family really working with you or is the family resistant, hostile, or uncooperative?
- ❑ **Regular robust reflective supervision** which is both challenging and supportive is crucial to the development of good professional judgement – how regular and effective is your supervision?
- ❑ **Professional challenge** is your responsibility if you don't think the multi agency work is adequately protecting the child – do you use the **Resolution of Professional Disagreement procedures**² when required?
- ❑ **Domestic violence, parental substance misuse, and parental mental health issues (toxic trio)** can impact significantly on a child – have you really assessed the impact these risks are having on the child/young person you are working with?
- ❑ Understanding the **parent's capacity to change their behaviour** – can the parents make and maintain the changes to care for the child safely?

1

SSCB Safeguarding Children Procedures can be found at www.sunderlandscb.com

2

- ❏ **Information sharing is the foundation of good multi agency working**
– have you shared all relevant information with other professionals working with the child?
- ❏ Clarity of **roles and responsibilities** – what are the roles of each core/care group member with this child?
- ❏ Plans must be **outcome focussed** – what are you trying to achieve, does the family understand this and how will you know when you get there?

