



# Learning & Improvement Briefing Sheet 7

## Summary of the triennial analysis of Serious Case Reviews 2011 - 2014

### “Pathways to harm, pathways to protection”

This report, written by the University of Warwick and the University of East Anglia, covers the period from 2011 and 2014 and analyses 293 Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) relating to incidents which occurred between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2014. It is the fifth consecutive analysis of SCRs by this research team; together these reports cover 11 years from 2003-14. This 'long view' has allowed the team to build a picture of the nature and circumstances of serious and fatal maltreatment.

It is important to keep in mind that SCR's are commissioned when things have gone seriously wrong in the life of a child or young person. Appropriate and timely actions ensure that many children and young people are safe or are protected from harm. The authors of the report state:

***These apparent failures (the SCR cases) ... need to be seen in the light of the effective safeguarding work that takes place across the country on a daily basis. For many of these children, the harms they suffered occurred not because of, but in spite of, all the work that professionals were doing to support and protect them (p. 165).***

The full report is just under 250 pages (excluding appendices) and can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

Research in Practice, in collaboration with the report authors, have designed a series of video clips and practice briefings for different professional sectors. It is recommended that practitioners, managers and Safeguarding Leads read the appropriate briefing for their organisation. They can be found at:

[Research in Practice briefings for social workers and family support workers](#)

[Research in Practice briefing for education sector](#)

[Research in Practice briefing for Police and criminal justice agencies](#)

[Research in Practice for Health](#)

[Research in Practice for Local Safeguarding Boards](#)

There are more than 80 over-arching learning points and it is a challenge to condense these into a single Learning and Improvement Briefing, so an extended briefing has been produced (PowerPoint Presentation), which may be used to form the basis of a training presentation. It can be accessed on the WSCB website or by clicking [here](#)



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Factors within the family, such as those listed below, may interact with each other compounding the level of risk to the child:



- ⇒ **Domestic abuse**
- ⇒ **Parental mental health problems**
- ⇒ **Drug and alcohol misuse**
- ⇒ **Adverse childhood experiences**
- ⇒ **A history of criminality, particularly violent crime**
- ⇒ **Patterns of multiple, consecutive partners**
- ⇒ **Acrimonious separation**

The [PowerPoint presentation](#) examines in closer detail the findings from the analysis and these include:

- Infancy remains the period of highest risk for serious and fatal child maltreatment
- There are increased risks to young people during adolescence
- Most serious and fatal child maltreatment occurs within the family home, involving parents or other close family members. Very little serious or fatal maltreatment involves strangers unknown to the child or young person
- Children who are not regularly in school, due to poor attendance, home schooling or exclusion, can be vulnerable due to their 'invisibility' and social isolation
- Domestic abuse is always harmful to children and such cases should prompt a careful consideration of the harms those children are suffering and how they can be effectively protected
- Professionals working with adults with mental health difficulties should be alert to additional factors or warning signs in the adult's presentation, and must enquire about whether the person has contact with or cares for any children
- Be aware of 'silent' indicators (emotional, behavioural and presentational changes in children) as well as listening to what they actually say
- Disabled children are particularly vulnerable to abuse and neglect
- The internet can allow inappropriate relationships to develop which are harmful to young people