

# **WORCESTERSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD**

## **Press Statement: FW Serious Case Review**

Local Safeguarding Children Boards are required to undertake a Serious Case Review when a child dies or is seriously injured and abuse or neglect is suspected. The purpose of a Serious Case Review is to establish whether there are any lessons to be learned from the child's death about the way in which local organisations work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, to make recommendations in response to these findings and, as a result, to improve inter-agency working and the safeguarding of children and young people.

Today Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board is publishing the Executive Summary of the Serious Case Review in respect of the circumstances leading to the tragic death of FW. Our thoughts continue to be with the family.

The Serious Case Review was undertaken in line with the guidance in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010.

The cause of FW's death is unknown, but it is known that the baby had been co-sleeping in the parents' bed at the time of death and that the parents had consumed alcohol and controlled drugs. It is apparent that this is a very loving family, which receives support from their wider family, and there are many positive aspects to the care of the children. However, there had been concerns about the mother's excessive use of alcohol over many years and there were also indications of cannabis use by both parents. There is evidence that this had impacted on their parenting and that the eldest child had taken on a caring role in respect of the other children.

The family had been known to Health Services, Schools and Children's Social Care. In general the SCR concluded that the parents had appeared to be co-operative with agencies, but in fact had managed to deflect workers from the key issues and agencies had failed to challenge this.

Lessons were identified for agencies, which included:

- The need for key staff to receive training in substance misuse and to understand its impact on parenting.
- The need for practitioners to engage actively with fathers in the work undertaken with families.
- The importance of listening to children and young people and recognising their needs as young carers in certain situations.

- The importance of the use of chronologies, including multi-agency chronologies, to build up a picture of family life

In addition, the SCR recognised the dangers inherent in parents co-sleeping with babies and young children, which increase greatly with parents' use of drugs and alcohol. The Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust and the Health and Care Trust are working together on the 'Safer Sleeping' Campaign which is aimed at raising parents and carers' awareness of the risks of co-sleeping with babies and young children, particularly following the use of alcohol and drugs. Midwives and Health Visitors have a vital role in this, both in the ante-natal period and following a baby's birth. The pilot is underway in Redditch and Malvern and is due to be rolled out in other parts of Worcestershire over the coming months.

In response to the findings of the SCR, WSCB has an Action Plan in place. This comprises the recommendations which each agency has made for improvement, as well as the recommendations for inter-agency working. The implementation of the Action Plan is being closely monitored by WSCB and there is evidence that the recommendations are being acted upon.

Further information can be found in The Executive Summary of this Serious Case Review which is available on the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board website, which is accessed through:

[www.worcestershire.gov.uk](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk)

### **Editorial Notes:**

Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) was established in April 2006, following The Children's Act 2004, and is responsible for co-ordinating the work of all agencies for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, as well as ensuring the effectiveness of this work.

Diana Fulbrook was appointed as Independent Chair of WSCB on 1 April 2012 to ensure robust overview and scrutiny.

Serious Case Reviews are conducted under the Government's statutory guidance "Working Together to Safeguard Children" published in 2006 and revised in 2010 and 2013.

The Executive Summary of this SCR is published on the WSCB website using the name FW in line with OFSTED guidance in respect of protecting the anonymity of the children.

In the past WSCB has been commended for the thoroughness of its SCRs. Further information on the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board can be found on [www.worcestershire.gov.uk](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk)

**Contact Details:** At the request of Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB), media enquiries regarding this Serious Case Review will be co-ordinated by Worcestershire County Council on behalf of the WSCB. Contact telephone numbers are: 01905 822058 or 01905 766646