



STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 09:00HRS FRIDAY 19 MARCH

SERIOUS CASE REVIEW

STOCKTON-on-Tees Local Safeguarding Children Board has published a Serious Case Review (SCR) into the multi-agency care surrounding a young female child. The multi agency review, which was carried out by a Serious Case Review panel led by an Independent Chairperson, has been a comprehensive investigation of events which occurred.

The child at the centre of the SCR was living with her family when she was subjected to a serious sexual assault by an adult male who was living as part of the household. At the time of the abuse this adult male was receiving treatment and being supervised by two agencies and was subject to notification as a registered sex offender.

Stockton-on-Tees Local Safeguarding Children Board was required to carry out the SCR into the circumstances surrounding the case under the provisions of the Government document, "Working Together to Safeguard Children" (2006).

The purpose of the review was to examine the ways in which agencies and professionals worked together, to identify any lessons which could be learnt and to propose recommendations to ensure that this learning is not lost.

The review did find some evidence of good practice in every agency however it concluded that there were also clear failings by a number of agencies to consider the protection of the child and undertake a full assessment of risks.

The review makes a number of recommendations for all the agencies involved in the case - Stockton-on-Tees Local Safeguarding Children Board, Stockton Council's Education and Social Care Service, Durham County Council's Children and Young People's Service, The Probation Service – Teesside and Durham, Durham Constabulary, Cleveland Police and Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board.

These include detailed recommendations in the following areas:

- Improvements in the timeliness and quality of the recording and sharing of information between partner agencies
- Improvements in the assessment of risk to children where a sex offender is living in a family setting and improved communication of this risk to the family members. The recommendations on risk assessment also identify the need to continually re-evaluate risks over time
- An audit of all cases where sex offenders are in contact with children to ensure that appropriate actions have been taken
- Improvements in the management and supervision of child safeguarding cases
- Further training and awareness raising for staff involved in the investigation and management of child abuse cases
- A review of issues and follow up action relating to individual members of staff where appropriate

Jane Humphreys, Chair of Stockton Local Safeguarding Children Board, said: "Speaking on behalf of all the agencies we are profoundly sorry for our failures in this case. We particularly regret we did not provide the mother of this child with information to enable her to adequately protect her daughter. We are continuing to offer support to the family.

"The well being of children is of utmost importance and we deeply regret the impact this case had on the child. We fully support the report's

recommendations and will continue to work in partnership across all agencies to address the shortcomings highlighted to strengthen the services we offer.”

Ends

NOTE TO EDITORS: Statement issued by Stockton Council Communications Unit on behalf of Stockton-on-Tees Local Safeguarding Children Board

The Stockton-on-Tees Local Safeguarding Children Board members are:

- **Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council**
- **Cleveland Police**
- **National Probation Service – Teesside and Durham**
- **North East Strategic Health Authority and Stockton-on-Tees Teaching Primary Care Trust**
- **North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust**
- **Tees Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Trust**
- **Connexions**
- **CAFCASS (Children & Family Courts Advisory and Support Service)**
- **Barnados**
- **Schools, College and Further Education (Riverside College)**
- **NSPCC (National Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children)**
- **The Fire Service**

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Local Safeguarding Children Board**