



Response Statement from Northumberland Safeguarding Children Board (NSCB) on Baby Eve.

This Serious Case Review (SCR) has examined the circumstances surrounding the death of Baby Eve in March 2013. The report contains recommendations for the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) as well as for individual agencies which have contributed to the SCR. The report concludes that there are a number of lessons for those agencies which had duties relating to supporting the welfare of Baby Eve.

The LSCB is a multi-agency body of agencies within Northumberland responsible for safeguarding children. Our joint role is to promote effective joint working, and to hold each other to account for the quality of work with children and their families.

Collectively, we regret that there were several areas where agencies could, and should, have done better. With hindsight, there were a number of occasions in the months immediately before Baby Eve's birth, and earlier during her mother's pregnancy when professionals could have acted differently. We cannot say that if they had done so, Baby Eve's death would have been avoided but we can say that many of our agencies could and should have responded differently.

We commissioned this SCR on 5 April 2013 using best practice guidance as set out in *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013*. We fully accepted all of the findings of the overview report at the Extra-Ordinary meeting of the LSCB on 10 April 2015.

We found evidence of several areas requiring attention such as:

- The need to improve the quality of supervision and the management of staff who are dealing with challenging cases and to ensure that there is reflective and robust analysis of cases
- The review and improvement of record keeping across parts of the system
- The improvement of systems to invite professionals to child protection meetings, to record attendance and to pro-actively follow up any gaps in attendance and involvement.

- The escalation of concerns to a more senior level when front-line multi agency interventions are identified as not being effective
- Involving children in their assessments and care plans and making sure their voice is heard.
- Recognising when parents appear to cooperate with professionals but aren't effecting sufficient changes to their parenting and identifying the long term impact of that on their children's lives.

Whilst the review was being conducted both the LSCB and the individual agencies have responded to the issues as they have been identified (addendum attached).

These issues have included:


- The multi-agency guidance relating to the birth plan has been updated for all children who are a child in need or have a child protection plan
- The re-writing of operational guidance for the care pathway substance-using pregnant women
- Developing a series of workshops for staff from all partner agencies on the issues raised by this case; the lessons learned from this review; and the actions which have been put in place to reduce the risk of similar mistakes.
- Agreed standards for all partners regarding the production and authorship of child protection conference documentation whether representatives are in attendance or not

The LSCB has also developed a comprehensive action plan to make sure that all the recommendations are prioritised and completed within a rapid timescale and that these actions have a positive impact on the safeguarding of children.

The LSCB will continue to rigorously monitor the full implementation of all the relevant learning from this SCR and that similar errors are not repeated. We recognise that we need to keep on working effectively with each other to support families and to protect young people from harm as far as we're able but when there is robust review when things have not gone right, and an openness to change, then we can expect that our services will continue to improve. All the agencies within the LSCB are firmly committed to this principle.

If you have any queries please contact Steve Day (Safeguarding Standards Manager tel. 01670 623 980) in the first instance.

Signed:



Paula Mead

Independent Chair

Northumberland Local Safeguarding Children Board