

Keeping Children and Young People Safe from Harm, Abuse and Neglect



Highlighting Lessons
from Case Review

Regional

Details have been changed to protect the identity and privacy of family members and professionals involved in this case.

A professionals summary of the
Case Review is available from:

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Date of Review: November 2011
Local Authority: Newcastle
Name: Child B

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Summary

Child B was admitted to hospital from home in March 2010 in a collapsed state and was found to be in multi organ failure brought on by paracetamol ingestion. Despite intense efforts to save Child B's life, including a liver transplant, she died.

Initial information indicated that Child B took the paracetamol and was ill at home for 3 days prior to medical attention being sought.

A criminal investigation was commenced following an allegation to the Police that Child B's mother had been aware of the overdose throughout the weekend prior to the death and failed to seek medical assistance.

Subsequent enquires suggested that Child B's father, and older sibling were also aware of her condition.

Key Messages:

- Adolescents represent a quarter of deaths where abuse and neglect are suspected [Brandon et al 2009]
- Vulnerable young people have been influenced and effected by the parenting and level of care they have received

Key Points of Learning:

- There is no single solution or intervention; a creative and flexible approach is required
- Young people are treated and responded to as adults leading to low expectations & desensitisation
- The professional relationship with a young person is very important therefore there is a need for consistency of workers
- Importance of support for the young person and family whilst excluded from school; alternative provision
- The importance of a good quality assessment, including a full history
- Commitment and continuous efforts by professionals knowledge, skills and confidence in working with families where neglect is a feature
- Recognise the potential risks to children of alcohol & drug misuse and the need for early identification
- Engaging with the wider family

Messages / Points to Consider:

- Adolescent neglect
- Engaging and working with young people
- Children living in highly resistant families
- The dangers of paracetamol use and young people