

01

Background

Child MM arrived in the UK with sibling via a lorry from Afghanistan due to their fear of the Taliban. Both were placed at an in-house foster placement under the status of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

There were questions raised about Child MM and siblings ages but as yet a Merton Age Assessment has not been completed.

During the Initial Health Assessment of Child MM, dental issues and weight loss were recorded as well as confirming they had been beaten on their journey to the UK and had also observed dead people but declined therapeutic support at first. Therapeutic intervention was requested two years later and a CAMHS referral was completed.

The siblings suffered distress when they were separated after the older sibling was moved into their own accommodation after turning 18 years. Child MM refused to return to the foster placement and moved in with the sibling.

Child MM and sibling are currently living in a bed and breakfast placement and there are ongoing discussions and plans for the next steps for them.

02

Incident

Child MM received two stab wounds, one to the wrist and one on their side which paramedics described as life threatening. The cause of the incident is unclear but was suspected to be over a moped. The alleged perpetrator is also an unaccompanied asylum seeker child and was known to Child MM.

03

Key findings

- How sibling relationships are assessed
- The quality of practice around placement and care planning
- Preparation for independence and understanding the unique needs of an unaccompanied asylum seeker child (UASC)
- The importance of practitioners having a sound understanding of cultural differences
- Unconscious bias in relation to decision making
- Managing conflict in the multi-agency decision making system
- The importance of UASC having contact with family members
- Missing young people
- Unregistered placements
- An effective system to safeguard UASC

07

Implementing Change

- A UASC Task and Finish Group is underway to share processes, practice and learning from BCP and Dorset.
- Dorset Police are leading on a focus group with partners on the UASC cohort
- Ongoing work to policies and procedures in respect of UASC.
- The age assessment backlog is being worked through and the young people with concerns raised about their age are being prioritised for assessment.

04

Learning

- The IRO highlights some communication issues with the Children in Care team around the timeliness of communication between the social workers and IROs when there is a change in circumstances.
- The timeliness of UASC age assessments is identified as an ongoing issue by the Police (and CSC) and is a learning point from a local BCP structured case debrief, from which an action plan is being developed.
- Placement planning and decision making for UASC, including the assessment of sibling relationships.

05

Learning

- Reflection on how the system for missing young people can conflict with the best interests of young people.
- Partners are of the view there is wider learning around assessing the needs and taking a trauma-informed approach to the care and support of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and how the emotional, physical and social needs of this vulnerable group are met. This is supported by the Rapid Review members.



Child MM
7 - Minute
Briefing

06

Actions

- Feedback to be given to CSC senior leaders from the review on the timeliness of communication between social workers and IROs.
- CSC to provide assurance to the Partnership there is a robust safety plan in place given the alleged perpetrator has not yet been apprehended by the police
- CSC to provide assurance to the Partnership there is a robust plan in place for tackling the delay in the timeliness of Merton age assessments
- Learning from the CSC UASC audit to be fed into the BCP Quality Assurance Group
- To share the learning from the review to inform discussions held at the BCP Child Scrutiny Panel on missing young people

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