



7 minute briefing: LEARNING FROM A RAPID REVIEW

For all those working with adults, children and families

1. RAPID REVIEWS

A rapid review is a statutory process which is required when a child has experienced a serious incident and it is known or suspected that they may have been abused or neglected. The purpose is to identify any safeguarding concerns for them or other children in the family and any immediate learning that could improve future practice



2. WHAT HAPPENED AND TO WHO?

Child E was 17 years old, from a Gambian family, brought up in Spain and living with his older brothers in Waltham Forest. He was stabbed outside his family home in October 2020 and very sadly died. Child E had significant interactions with the Police and was awaiting court dates related to alleged drug offences. This led to the Youth and Family Resilience Service (YFRS) reaching out to him offering support, as a voluntary intervention, as they believed he was being criminally exploited. Child E and his brothers did not feel this was the situation.

Whilst this was a voluntary intervention, which means there was no requirement for Child E to engage or the YFRS to offer a service, the YFRS officer approached it in the same way as a statutory case due to her concerns about his exploitation. The YFRS made substantial attempts at engaging with Child E and his brothers

3. GOOD PRACTICE

The YFRS adopted a strength-based approach which increased Child E's limited engagement. The YFRS officer continued to challenge Child E about his purchasing power which wasn't consistent with his lack of income and challenge Child E and his brother's perception that there was nothing to be concerned about regarding Child E's peers. Child E was given support to access benefits education and employment.

4. WHAT IS THE LEARNING?

Importance of a child first approach and always treating children as children not adults: The Police did not always send Merlins to the MASH when they had interaction with Child E which led to an incomplete safeguarding picture. There was also a lack of curiosity about who was acting as Child E's parent. In the first interactions he was only 16 years old and not in school.

National audit/research tells us that when young people physically look "older", as Child E did, practitioners can treat them as an adult and minimise the risk that the young person is facing, this is particularly significant when young people are being criminally exploited. See [Safeguarding Adolescents Practice Guide](#) re. Child First approach

Not all young people are registered with a GP: Child E was not registered with a GP and did not have an NHS number, although other family members were registered.

7. WHAT YOU CAN DO

DISCUSS this 7 minute briefing in team meetings and in supervision

USE the safeguarding adolescents [practice guide](#) and [resource](#)

ATTEND [Safeguarding Adolescents Awareness training](#)

JOIN the Safeguarding Adolescents Leads Network or find your agency rep. Contact Zahra.jones@walthamforest.gov.uk for more information

6. ACTION TO BE TAKEN TO ADDRESS THE LEARNING

- Police - investigate and address why Merlins were not completed
- Adolescents Safeguarding and Resilience Strategic Group - refresh child first approach and transitions work
- New multi-agency task & finish group - explore creative solutions / appropriate pathways for practitioners to take when challenged with limited engagement from young people and their families.
- WFSCB Embed awareness raising, particularly with non-health agencies to raise importance of everyone encouraging / supporting all residents to register with a GP.

5. WHAT IS THE LEARNING?

Challenge of working with young people & their families when engagement is limited, particularly, but not only, when engagement is voluntary: All agencies need to be curious and have a safeguarding lens as to understanding the context in which children are living. If not with their parents, who is acting "[in loco parentis](#)" and how can agencies engage with that person and assess how they are undertaking the parenting role? How and when do agencies use family meetings to highlight and emphasise agencies' concerns about exploitation and risk.