

7 minute briefing – April 2023

Child safeguarding practice review for Kubus

For all those working with adults, children and families

A child safeguarding practice review (CSPR previously known as SCR or serious case review) is a learning exercise that takes place when abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected and a child has died or been seriously harmed. The review is not about blame. It is about improving practice for the future.



Strategic Partnership Boards
SAFETY SAFEGUARDING WELLBEING

1 About Kubus* and the CSPR findings

Kubus, a 15-week-old baby boy, died while sleeping on his stomach on an inflatable mattress with his mother. They had recently moved into a new area. This review explores the services provided to him / his family during his mother's pregnancy and his short life, in which domestic abuse featured significantly. Cause of death was recorded as sudden unexpected death in infancy (SUDI).

A key finding was the cumulative risk to mother and child with the varying health, social and environmental risk factors present from conception. Missed opportunities, such as mother's experience of domestic abuse and lack of trust in services alongside challenges with housing, and paternal alcohol use all had an impact. This was all compounded by the Covid-19 Pandemic.

** Named Kubus in this review, as per his mother's wishes*



2 Impacting factor one: COVID-19

The impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic featured significantly in this review, affecting service delivery and modified ways of working.

Impacting factor two: PREGNANCY

The challenges faced by Kubus' mother in the ante, peri and postnatal periods reinforce the importance of a professionally curious practice.

3 Impacting factor three: HOUSING

Understanding service users' living circumstances is vital for contextualising risk and identifying support required, particularly in the context of SUDI, and risks posed by domestic abuse and environment such as overcrowding, smoking, drugs & alcohol, damp & cold.

Impacting factor four: DOMESTIC ABUSE

The impact of domestic abuse on the unborn and all children has a strong evidence base that is well documented. Those affected by domestic abuse may not recognise it as such. It is important that professionals are mindful of all the different ways domestic abuse may occur, to recognise and facilitate the disclosure of coercive control, especially safely asking the person directly, even if this may feel challenging.

5 Impacting factor six: FATHERS

Including fathers in assessments, absent or living in the household is so important. There is a tendency to rely on mothers to tell us about the men in their children's lives. Fully understanding parental experience enables appropriate early signposting / support.

Impacting factor seven: DOCUMENTATION

More effective recording and information sharing could have enabled professionals to address the overcrowding, safe sleeping arrangements and supporting Kubus' mother with registering with a new GP practice.

4 Impacting factor five: CULTURAL COMPETENCE

Where English is a second language, there may be difficulties in the way that language is understood and expressed. Also note that professionals may not be native English speakers and they may fail to understand and be understood. Therefore, it is imperative to check understanding and reasonably adjust our communication until we are understood, and we understand.

7 WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

- **READ** [CSPR Kubus](#) and share widely
- **ASK THE 2ND QUESTION:** discuss / use the [professional curiosity resources pack](#) in your team
- **REFRESH YOUR KNOWLEDGE** and [understanding of domestic abuse](#)
- **FAMILIARISE** yourself with your service's resources for and access to interpreters
- **REFLECT** on the accuracy of recent records you have kept and the impact of information you have shared
- **SHARE** [safer sleeping messages](#) with families

6 Board response

The Waltham Forest Local Safeguarding Partners accept the review's findings and are committed to working together to improve practice. They are continuing to learn from the pandemic and will use this review in the event of another crisis. Read the [partnership response](#) in full.



More resources on Waltham Forest Strategic Partnership Boards' web pages