

01

Brian – Child Safeguarding Practice Review

Incident that led to the review

There had been escalating concerns about Brian. He had been involved in several criminal incidents and escalating youth violence, both on his own and with others. Brian was stabbed and was taken to intensive care in a critical condition. After receiving treatment, he was discharged. At the time of this incident Brian was subject to a child protection plan under the category of neglect. There were two significant incidents reported to police in the lead up to the stabbing of Brian, where threats to kill and physical assaults took place with Brian being the victim. Brian, his parents, and siblings continue to receive support from safeguarding agencies.

07

Changes and next steps

The review recognised the improvements that have been made in services following changes in leadership in Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Children's Services including: a revised early help strategy and offer, changes in approach to working with extra-familial harm and improved working with schools. There are now also stronger relationships with strategic partners and more effective join up with the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) who lead on serious youth violence.

The review made a series of recommendations, and an action plan is being implemented. This plan is being overseen by the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership. The full review report is on the PDSCP website.

06

Good Practice identified

Early identification of extra-familial harm on Brian's arrival at his secondary school which led to information being shared with police and Children's Social Care.

Following a series of suspensions and escalating aggression the school responded by putting in place a tailored programme to support maintenance of education.

At times there was evidence of a pro-active Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) that worked with partners to react to intelligence and incidents.

At times there was good multi-agency information sharing and planning.

Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership
Dorset Council
BCP Council
DORSET POLICE
NHS Dorset

02

Brian's story

Brian is an engaging, articulate child with complex needs and has neurodiverse tendencies (ADHD). He could become angry. Brian is academically able. Brian could be open and honest but didn't want to talk about his gang activity.

His family life had been disruptive and at times harmful. Brian has a very poor relationship with his father and regularly disclosed verbal and physical aggression from him. There have been periods of time when his parents were separated and then reconciled. His mother has mental health problems. Brian has a testing relationship with his siblings. Sometimes his mother struggled with parenting him.

Police intelligence reports indicated Brian was carrying knives and was involved in acts of violence towards peers, other criminality, and anti-social behaviour. He stated to his Social Worker that he had "enemies in the area, hence why he posted bravado pictures on social media to frighten his rivals". The criminal activity impacted negatively on the family.

Brian had relayed that he was "not happy" and that he "has low moods and feels down much of the time." Brian was known to self-harm. Brian was known to use cannabis and alcohol.



05

Key learning

- Panels, meetings, and other forums where children and young people are discussed need to ensure that duplication of information sharing, assessment and intervention is avoided and there is effective 'join up' between those panels and forums
- Children, young people, mothers, fathers, carers, and wider family should be actively engaged in work. The voices of children and young people need to be heard and responded to and the culture of working alongside children and young people encouraged. Youth justice and safeguarding systems should work in tandem.
- Practitioners need to develop their understanding of neurodiversity (Brian was diagnosed with ADHD) and the impacts that childhood experiences can have on children and young people.
- Practitioners need to be well supported in this complex work that may go beyond existing supervision arrangements
- Research and best practice should be incorporated into developing strategies to address extra-familial harm.

03

Involvement by Services

Brian and his family have had previous engagement with children's services. In the period under review, he was referred to Children's Social Care as his missing episodes increased and there were increased concerns about challenging behaviour at home and his use of cannabis and alcohol.

Brian was subject to both suspensions and permanent education exclusions. He had managed moves between schools including periods in alternative learning provisions.

Brian was the subject of several criminal enquiries related to the use of weapons, robbery, serious youth violence and drugs

Brian was referred to child mental health services owing to his challenging behaviour at home and his self-harming.

Three Child Exploitation Screening Tools were completed with an expectation that a specialist exploitation team would allocate a worker. However, 'exploitation' could not be evidenced.

Brian became subject to a child in need plan, yet his siblings were not made part of this plan and were closed to Children's Social Care. His increased risk in the community led to a Section 47 enquiry and subsequent Initial Child Protection Conference and plan.

04

Key learning

- Assessments should be holistic and focus on the risks from inside and outside of the family home and that these are not mutually exclusive. One will impact upon the other.
- Children and young people at emerging risk of extra-familial harm could benefit from targeted interventions that address those risks at an earlier stage including from Early Help (community) services.
- The level of skill, expertise, and knowledge of practitioners, outside of the specialist exploitation teams, needs to be enhanced to enable them to manage the risks and needs from extra-familial harm. This may also be enhanced by developing practitioner's skills and knowledge when working with young people.
- Schools, colleges and learning establishments have a key role to play in addressing extra-familial harm alongside safeguarding partners.
- Emerging intelligence about children and young people needs to be shared appropriately across the safeguarding system including within early help.