

Somerset Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) promotes a culture of continuous learning and improvement across the organisations that work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Somerset .

This is the second issue of *Things You Should Know*, which focuses on work carried out to safeguard the children of offenders. There is a summary of an in-depth case review which was carried out into the case of Child P, who was abused by a parent.

Following the case review the Audit Subgroups looked at 8 cases of multi-agency work with children who had a CIN or CP Plan, and some key messages from the audit are given on page 4.

For further information about the MAPPA arrangements see:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-public-protection-arrangements-mappa--2

<https://mappa.justice.gov.uk/connect.ti/MAPPA/groupHome>

www.somerset.gov.uk/adult-social-care/safer-communities/multi-agency-public-protection-arrangements



SERIOUS INCIDENT LEARNING REVIEW

6 STEP BRIEFING—CHILD P



1. The Background

Child P is a teenager, who at the time lived with their parents and siblings. Their father was well known to the police for violence and sexual offences, and had been imprisoned for indecent assault on a female under 16 before Child P was born. After Child P was born father had further convictions for offences including kidnapping and GBH. There had been a previous child protection plan.

2. Safeguarding Concerns

Child P's father was the subject of a Sexual Offences Prevention Order (SOPO) after reports of grooming teenage girls, and after breaching the SOPO he was given a custodial sentence. No assessment records that he might be a risk to his child. In addition there were concerns about Child P's mother.

3. The Incident

At age 16, Child P discloses 8 years of abuse from their father. This is 6 months after the school reported that the child has taken an overdose.

4. The Review

A Mandatory MAPPA SCR was carried out to examine MAPPA arrangements. In addition, SSCB conducted a Serious Incident Learning Review.

5. The Findings

- There was a lack of appropriate assessment at the right time and involving the right people. For example, an outdated risk assessment was used for Child P, and the SOPO exempted the child from the conditions as the child was not considered to be at risk.
- Mother's protective capacity was not questioned or assessed.
- Disguised compliance was evident for many years. See this [NSPCC factsheet](#) for information on disguised compliance.
- The prison reported concerns over the Father's behaviour to Child P on a visit (prior to disclosure); there is no evidence this was followed up.
- Opportunities to work with the family were not taken up when father was in prison.

6. Multi-agency recommendations

Risk is dynamic and needs to be re-assessed as cases progress, a process of **continual assessment** is needed because things change.

Professionals need to operate with **respectful uncertainty**.

If a parent is incarcerated this should be seen as an opportunity for working with the other parent and the children, and planning for release, rather than an opportunity to cease involvement of support services.

Agencies need to be mindful of planned release dates, and to be kept informed of any changes to the release dates. Necessary License requirements that are needed to safeguard others can be part of this discussion.

Reassessment is vital when a release date is known, to ascertain future risk and assess how plans will be policed.



WORKING TOGETHER TO TACKLE CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

On 30th November nearly 100 practitioners from across Somerset attended the SSCB conference on CSE. The sessions included information about the national context and the local picture, and a session from Edi Carmi, the Independent Author of a SCR currently underway in Somerset.

Edi Carmi explained that the SCR has looked at 9 victims of CSE, and that two men have recently been convicted for a range of offences as part of Operation Fenestra.

Another SCR, published by Bristol and another LSCB has looked at similar issues and recently published the [Brooke SCR into Child Sexual Exploitation](#). The Somerset SCR Panel were keen not to duplicate the Brooke SCR, so have looked at recent practice, and met with groups of young people, parents, and practitioners. The Somerset SCR will conclude and publish in due course.

The CSE conference was heavily over-subscribed, and following many requests is due to be repeated in March. Places will be allocated by agency leads to ensure a multi-agency approach.

Please see website for all other events, including the forthcoming conference on neglect, and for information on training courses:

sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk/training



AUDIT SUB GROUPS

The ASGs audited 8 cases; the children were various ages and all had a parent in prison. Some children had multiple family members who were offenders. Two were children with CIN plans, two with Child Protection Plans, and four had previously had Plans but these were now discontinued. The audits found that:

- Information was not always shared with other agencies about whether a parent / relative is an offender. In particular, Support Services for Education and Early Years were often not aware of the current home situation or possible risks. Sharing information with agencies after strategy discussions was a weak point, which was also an issue identified in the Child L and Child J SCR and described in [TUSK 1](#).
- With open cases, where a family member is in prison, there is not always a clear record of the release date for the offender. It is difficult for a robust action plan to be put in place in line with the release date of the offender when this is not known by all agencies.
- In the majority of the cases audited there was little evidence of working with fathers. The voice of the father was not consistently heard.

Things you should know

Even if a child has been a victim of abuse and cannot have contact with their parent, they may still have concerns and anxieties about how their parent is being treated in prison, and what prison is like. There are a number of resources available to support children to understand, including images of bedrooms, workplaces, meals etc, so they understand their parent is safe. See www.i-hop.org.uk for information about resources.

For recent research from Serious Case Reviews about hearing and including the voice of the family when working with children, see section 6.4.2 of Sidebotham, P., Brandon, M., et al (2016) **Pathways to harm, pathways to protection: a triennial analysis of serious case reviews 2011 to 2014: final report**. [London]: Department for Education. [Click here](#) for a direct link to the review.

Contact the SSCB!

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