

## Briefing on Serious Case Reviews

Keanu Williams (Published by [Birmingham LSCB](#), October 2013)

### Background

Keanu Williams aged 2 years died in January 2011 from multiple injuries, later determined to be the result of separate incidents with several major injuries being sustained over a period of days. Mother was convicted of Keanu's murder and of 'cruelty to a child' in respect of one his older half siblings; she was sentenced to 18 years imprisonment. Mother's partner was convicted of 'cruelty to a child' and received a 9 month suspended sentence. Mother spent periods of time in foster care subject to care orders throughout her own childhood. Keanu's older siblings were subjects of residence orders to maternal grandfather. History of frequent house moves and periods of homelessness and frequent changes in maternal relationships, including partners met over social networking sites.

### Key Learning Points:

#### ***Focus on the child***

- Practitioners individually and collectively need to “see, hear and respond to the child in the context of their life experiences”.

#### ***Commitment to interagency child protection processes***

- Particularly sharing information, sharing responsibility and critically challenge and assess the information available to plan support for the child and family. Where there is a clear risk of significant harm agencies should act decisively to protect the child.

#### ***Ensuring best practice***

- Middle and senior managers in every organisation must focus on the quality of frontline practice and on the way frontline staff are directly managed and supported.

#### ***Empowering professional judgements***

- Practitioners should be freed up to use their professional experience and exercise professional curiosity (particularly concerning injuries) using simple frameworks and protocols.

#### ***Nurturing looked after children***

- Parents are likely to struggle bringing up their own children if they have received poor care as a child (Keanu's mother was looked after).

#### ***Recording the child's story***

- Practitioners should consider all new information in the light of what has happened before, rather than treating each episode in isolation. Chronologies or similar types of recording should be central to best practice and inform multi agency information sharing, the analysis of the facts and context of the child's situation and the interventions that will safeguard and promote children's welfare.

### ***Promoting assertiveness***

- Practitioners and managers must pursue their concerns, take action, actively discuss disagreements and escalate concerns if others cannot be persuaded about the judgement of risk and the need for intervention.

### ***Timely and assured responses***

- Where children and families are supported by through early help, CAF or CIN services, responses should be stepped up where safeguarding children concerns are identified.

### ***Improved medical examination processes***

- Practitioners, including line managers, must be clear on their respective roles and responsibilities when sharing information, analysing the facts and context of any injuries and reaching decisions based on the interpretation of medical evidence.

### ***Enhancing core skills working with parents***

- Some parents and carers are hostile, deceptive and uncooperative. The single agency and multi agency training programmes should include effective learning opportunities so practitioners can develop skills as lone workers and jointly with other disciplines to minimise the impact of such negative behaviours.

