



“Foster mother jailed for horrifying cruelty and sadism”

Daily Mail,
19th April 2007



www.gscb.org.uk/scr (0105)



The Spry Story

Family Background:

Two children of her own
Two younger children fostered - this becomes private fostering
Two further children privately fostered (different family)
Finally child number 5 privately fostered soon after birth.
Own children become carers of the younger children.



The Care Career

Two birth children
Childminder
Foster carer
Private Foster carer
PR by Residence Order
Adopter
Carer for Older Person and Parents



Agency Involvement

Social care involvement
Education - at school and at home
Health - including dental practitioners, CAMHS, Paediatric services
Police – running away
Voluntary agencies– Playgroup/G'bread
Faith group



The Issues

Alternative and Eccentric Lifestyle
Lack of Child focus
Isolated/Hard to reach Family
School complain of low warmth high criticism
Home Education
Names/addresses changed
Crossing between counties
False, determined presentation by family
Referrals dealt with in isolation – no pattern
Co-ordination of medical involvement
Lack of assessment activity



The Issues

Medical services abandoned when challenging
Prescriptions changed by Mother
Chemist complains about use of ritalin
Police called because child runs away
Neighbours complain
Fait Accompli



SCR
Recommendations

Next



SCR
Recommendations

- Responding to concerns about children who are educated at home
- Establishing links between child health and EHES (home education)
- Lobby for change in law on EHES
- Seeing children on their own when assessing
- Seeking children's views in legal proceedings
- Impact of parent lifestyle



SCR
Recommendations

- Information sharing across borders
- Managing multiple health needs & interventions
- Secondary source of diagnosis of medical condition
- Developing use of chronologies in all agencies
- Support for work with hard to reach families - supervision
- The value of unannounced visits
- Establishing legal status of children
- Police to establish cause of children running away
- Safeguarding training for dentists and opticians



What we have done

The GSCB completes three SCRs within a short space of time
Four SCR road shows around the county
Staff contacted to determine how practice has changed
Poster widely distributed
Meeting of GSCB multi agency and single agency trainers
New advice to elective home educators
Attaching School Nurse to EHES
Promotion over the use of strategy discussions
Protocol with neighbouring LSCBs being developed - through SW Health Lead Professionals
Targeted training for opticians and dentists
Safeguarding Children Alert

Poster

Steps to safeguarding children & young people

9 lessons to inform your practice

- Be child focused**
See the child's eyes. Listen to what the child says. How they talk & behave.
- Use strategy discussions**
to share information and for clear decision-making.
- Parents & carers**
Assess their capacity & motivation to change.
- Focus on the holistic view**
Not just the most visible or pressing problems.
- Risk management & decision-making**
Requires consistent reflection.
- Logging child welfare concerns**
Highlights concerns about the family.
- Chronology & recording**
Builds a history & pattern of events which can be easily interpreted.
- Inter-agency working**
Understand other agencies' roles and responsibilities.
- Assumptions & prejudgements about families**
May lead to observations being ignored & misinterpreted.

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