

Rapid Reviews: Young Person C



Background

- Young Person C died following suspected drug use during a missing episode.
- The family was known to children's social care and siblings became looked after. While Young Person C lived with family members the relationships were described as fragile and following increasing concern about drug use, theft and verbal and physical aggression, a residential placement was arranged.
- Young Person C expressed concern about being removed from his family, initially there was a plan to re-unify, but four months later a Final Care Order was granted. During this period there was an increase in missing episodes resulting in multiple moves, including being accommodated out of area.
- Young Person C experienced significant trauma in their life. They were vulnerable and at risk of exploitation having difficulties with learning, comprehension and processing information, they had multiple fixed-term exclusions from school.
- They experienced violent assaults in the home and community, had frequent missing episodes with links to adults and addresses of concern, criminal activity, and were known to have been in debt to drug dealers. These were all indicators of increasing risk and vulnerability in the months leading up to their death.

Learning

- A Trusted Professional/Person approach could have been used to build a strong and consistent relationship.
- Additional care should be taken to ensure that vulnerable young people understand the information they are given, especially information which may help keep them safe. Young Person C was assessed as having difficulties with learning, processing, and comprehending information, this would impact his ability to judge risks and stay safe. A comprehensive psychological assessment gave guidance on how to effectively engage and support him and could have been used by professionals.
- The impact of neglect should be explored in terms of its impact on emotional wellbeing and behaviour. Neglect can be a source of significant trauma.
- Trauma Informed Approaches should inform all work with young people.
- Intervening at critical moments can make a difference, such as: school exclusions; assaults; arrests; and being placed in care.
- Supporting children at risk of exploitation to engage in positive activities that are meaningful to them is important in building safety, confidence and diverting from harm.

Learning

- Moving placements may reduce some risks whilst potentially increasing others. Out of area and secure placements may reduce risks in the short term but does not offer long term safety.
- The [Review It was hard to escape - Safeguarding children at risk from criminal exploitation](#) highlights factors that can make a difference.
- There was extensive involvement with Young Person C from a young age, but this did not seem to address the trauma he suffered.
- He was willing to engage with professionals and had hobbies and interests which he could have been supported to engage with. The professionals who supported them spoke positively about them. He was doing well at school and had plans to continue with his education
- Whilst Young Person C suffered harm living with his family – he did not want to live apart from them. Family members were able to visit Young Person C when in an out of area placement and maintain contact with them.

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