

Rapid Reviews: Young Person BR



Background

- BR lived with his mum and siblings and was a victim of a serious assault in the community following a dispute between two groups of young people.
- BR was diagnosed with learning, social and emotional difficulties at primary school. He experienced difficulties with speech, language and communication. These difficulties impacted one another.
- BR found a mainstream school setting challenging, and schools often struggled to manage his needs. His school attendance was low. He was involved in several incidents in school, including the assault of other students. This resulted in him being permanently excluded from school.
- BR had also experienced several traumatic incidents in his life, including domestic abuse, the death of a close relative and was the victim of an alleged assault in the community.
- BR had an Education and Health Care Plan and although an appropriate placement was arranged BR spent a significant period of time out of education.
- Concerns had also been raised that BR was involved in antisocial behaviour in the community with other young people. He was arrested for youth disorder, possession of a weapon, assaults and violent disorder.
- Professionals involved were concerned that BR was at risk in the community, including risk of exploitation. These concerns fluctuated over several years. At points there was strong evidence he was being exploited.
- He had been chased in the community and his family had been threatened and his home had been targeted.

Learning

- There was a lack of collective consideration, curiosity, and analysis regarding BR's peers and his place in the community. This would have been crucial to understanding the identifiable and increasing levels of concern he faced outside the home.
- Although BR was known to have vulnerabilities and difficulties, these were not explored in relation to the risks he faced in the community.
- Whilst BR was known to be vulnerable, often the focus of services was on the perceived risk he posed with regards to anti-social behaviour and crime rather than on the risks associated with being exploited. Despite the involvement of a number of professionals with the family there was little real understanding of the lived experience of BR. For example, the combined impact of risks and vulnerabilities for BR were not well understood with regards to his home life, his engagement with education and his safety in the community.
- Whilst a number of services had worked with BR and his family his voice is not really evident. Spending time with a child is a prerequisite to building a relationship of trust. This is critical to establishing the child's voice and understanding their wishes and feelings.
- The impact of the neglect and abuse BR experienced was not effectively explored or understood with regards how this impacted on his emotional wellbeing or his safety in the community.
- The interventions were of limited effectiveness because of a lack of co-ordination between services and the absence of a shared understanding of the risks facing BR. More effective interagency communication may have resulted in a plan of interventions which reduced the risks BR faced.

Learning

- The risks BR faced in the community were not well understood. Services working in partnership could improve understanding of who is potentially at risk, causing or perpetrating harm to young people, for example through peer group or contextual mapping.
- The application of thresholds and decision making, particularly with regards to risk outside the home needs to be consistent and provide a proportionate response to the presenting concerns. [Applying Thresholds to Extra-Familial Harm](#) provides learning from Hackney.
- The plans put in place to support BR were not effective at reducing risk and vulnerability. There are clear points where agencies should have challenged the lack of progress from pieces of work.
- Information was not effectively shared, resulting in delays for support and key agencies not knowing or understanding the impact of his learning needs. His learning difficulties were not well shared with regards to his educational needs, which is likely to have had an impact on his needs not being well met in school.
- Information recording was not always effective, for example incidents of support being declined was not recorded appropriately. This could have helped build a clearer picture of the risks and challenges that BR faced.
- BR was excluded from school and spent a significant period out of education. The publication [It Was Hard to Escape](#) highlights this as a trigger point for serious harm.
- At points the family did not share the concerns of professionals and did not always agree to support, despite there being evidence that BR was vulnerable and at risk. Working with families who do not share concerns is an area for development.

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