



Bedford Borough
Safeguarding Children Board

Baby Sama Serious Case Review Briefing April 2017



Welcome to this Serious Case Review (SCR) practitioner briefing to help practitioners and their managers understand the key messages from the Baby Sama SCR.

Who should read the SCR?

Any practitioner and manager whose work brings them into contact with children, young people and their families. The messages are just as important for those working in adult services (where service users are parents or carers). The term 'children' includes children and young people up to 18 years of age.

Why an SCR

Sama, aged 7 weeks, died after being crushed under the wheel of her father's car in a tragic accident. Sama's mother was 20 years old at the time of her death and her father was aged 28 years. Sama fell out of her car seat while her parents argued and she died from severe head injuries. A criminal investigation found that there was no intention to wilfully or maliciously cause injury to Sama.

Sama had been subject to a Child Protection Plan since her birth because her father had criminal convictions for violence; including domestic abuse. In addition, there was intelligence to suggest father was involved in drug dealing and breeding dogs for fighting.

Family Context

Sama's parents met when her mother was aged 15 years; father is 8 years older than mother. Numerous concerns were reported to agencies about the abusive and exploitative nature of this 'relationship'. Similar concerns

also existed about father's contact with a looked after child who was of a similar age to Sama's mother.

Mother was discussed at a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) as she had been assessed as high risk victim of domestic abuse. Mother did not consider that father presented a risk to her or Sama and this, along with father's criminal history, were the reasons that Sama was made subject to a Child Protection Plan.

Legal advice was sought by the Local Authority and it was decided to Sama should live with her mother in the community. Father visited the family home and advised professionals that he stayed over a couple of nights a week. Following her birth, no professional concerns were raised regarding the care provided to Sama.



Overview of Learning

The review identified 6 key areas of learning that can be used to inform safeguarding practice in Bedford Borough:

- Recognising and addressing the impact of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
 - Individuals who have been sexually exploited can defend their abuser and/or deny that the relationship is abusive. This will impact on their perception of the risks posed to themselves and their child and should be addressed as part of an assessment of the child's needs
- Pre birth assessments
 - Pre-birth assessments should be conducted on a multi-agency basis and in accordance with the BBSCB pre-birth protocol. Contact should be addressed as part of pre-birth planning. Practitioners should be familiar with and use the BBSCB pre-birth protocol.
- Dynamics of domestic abuse

