

Subject:	Siblings W and X Serious Case Review – Published 27 July 2017		
Date of Meeting:	Monday the 9 October 2017		
Report of:	Executive Director, Neighbourhoods, Communities and Housing		
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to enable the committee to have an overview of the circumstances of the death of W and X and the subsequent Serious Case Review (SCR) and its recommendations.
- 1.2 The report also outlines learning and practice changes arising out of the SCR.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 The committee is asked to note and consider the findings and recommendations from the Serious Case Review relating to W and X to ensure learning from the review is put into practice.
- 2.2 That the committee approves of the changes in practices that have taken place since the findings were published on 27 July 2017.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Chapter 4 of Working Together to Safeguard Children (DE, 2010,13 & 15) sets out the criteria for a Serious Case Review. A Serious Case Review should be carried out for every case where abuse or neglect is known or suspected and either a child dies; or a child is seriously harmed and there are concerns about how organisations or professionals worked together to safeguard the child.
- 3.2 This Serious Case Review concerned two siblings, W and X, who originated from a country in North Africa / Middle East and received services from local agencies. Both siblings travelled to Syria aged under eighteen years old and both are reported to have died in 2014, the elder soon after his eighteenth birthday and the younger at age seventeen. It was understood that the boys were with the Al-Nusra Front, which in 2013 pledged allegiance to Al Qaeda.

- 3.3 The review was commissioned to support the identification of the strengths and gaps in multi-agency responses, in the city of Brighton & Hove, to vulnerable adolescents at risk of exploitation through radicalisation.
- 3.4 The review covered the period of January 2012 – October 2014. Practitioners, senior managers, community members, Imams and the boys' mother contributed to the review.
- 3.5 The review examined the siblings and their family's experiences. This included their experience of being subjected to racist and religiously motivated abuse and attacks, domestic abuse and physical abuse. The review also considered the youngest four siblings' involvement in anti-social and criminal activities.
- 3.6 The review found that prior to the siblings travelling, the national intelligence and threat assessment did not suggest that young people were travelling abroad to fight, nor did local professionals identify that the siblings were at risk of being vulnerable to radicalisation or at risk of travelling to join fighting abroad.
- 3.7 The review identified 13 findings. These findings have been grouped into the following priority areas:
- Priority Area 1: Working with trauma (Finding 1)
 - Priority Area 2: Working with high risk adolescents (Findings 2,3,4,5)
 - Priority Area 3: Working with children vulnerable to radicalisation (Findings 6,7,8, 9,10)
 - Priority Area 4: Working with minority ethnic groups (Findings 11,12,13)
- 3.8 We have not replicated the full report and action plan here as they are already in the public domain. The report and safeguarding board response are here: - <http://www.brightonandhovelscb.org.uk/sibling-wx-serious-case-review/>
- 3.9 An action plan has been developed and actions against the 13 findings are being monitored by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) Serious Case Review Subcommittee, with progress reported to the LSCB.
- 3.10 The LSCB have accepted the findings from this review and there is a real appetite amongst partners to address the issues identified. Media coverage of the review was largely positive.

Media coverage included:

- National newspapers: (Guardian, Times, Telegraph, Daily Mail, Mirror, Independent).
- Regional/local newspapers: (Argus x4, Brighton & Hove News x2, Chichester Observer)
- National TV: (Sky, BBC and ITV)
- International TV: (Russia Today)
- National Radio: (Various news bulletin coverage across national commercial and BBC radio, including BBC Radio 2)

- Regional/local TV: (ITV Meridian, BBC South East Today)
- Regional/local Radio: (BBC Sussex: Various news bulletin coverage; extensive breakfast show coverage, Juice Brighton, Heart Sussex)
- Other online coverage: (Breitbart News, Yahoo News)

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 The SCR draws a set of key recommendations from the review that will be monitored and progressed against a multi-agency action plan that was developed following the review.
- 4.2 Those recommendations are attached to this report as an appendix.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The parents and the surviving siblings were all invited to contribute to the serious case review. The mother did meet with the lead reviewers and her perspective is explained throughout the report.
- 5.2 Information from the community was provided in four meetings with the lead reviewers and other member/s of the review team:
- One meeting with the mother of another young person (over the age of 18 when he travelled) who was killed fighting in Syria, and had travelled with W and X
 - Two meetings with individual members of community groups
 - A meeting with representatives from local Mosques, including two Imams
- 5.3 Representatives of community organisations were invited to meet with the authors, managers from community safety and the LSCB business manager to hear about the serious case review and to provide their perceptions on how children can be better protected from exploitation into radicalisation. This was a helpful meeting, attended by four people, but should be put into context as the beginning of such dialogue that will need to continue after this serious case review.
- 5.4 A further meeting was offered and attended by one person
- 5.5 A third meeting between the lead reviewers and eight Mosque representatives considered the findings of the serious case review and obtained valuable input to further develop these.
- 5.6 The perspectives provided in these three meetings are referenced in the findings.
- 5.7 The SCR has been published and is easily accessible through the Safeguarding Children Board website. There has been community engagement and consultation in relation to this case.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The review has found that prior to the siblings travelling, local and national intelligence and the then current threat assessment did not suggest that young people were travelling abroad to fight, nor did local professionals identify that the siblings were at risk of being vulnerable to radicalisation or at risk of travelling to join fighting abroad.
- 6.2 Many findings relate to the challenges for professionals to provide effective help and support to children who have suffered trauma in their early childhood. Such trauma can provide the context for children becoming vulnerable to exploitation as well as becoming involved in various risk taking and anti-social behaviour.
- 6.3 The core of this review examines the siblings and their family's experiences. This includes their experience of being subjected to racist and religiously motivated abuse and attacks, domestic abuse and physical abuse.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

The LSCB and safeguarding reviews have an agreed budget. An annual report is provided to the HWB outline budget intentions and past spend.

David Ellis, Accountant, Business Engagement – Children's Finance

Date: August 2017

Legal Implications:

It is a statutory requirement that safeguarding reviews are commissioned and published.

Sandra O'Brien Senior Lawyer - Social & Education Services

Date: August 2017

Equalities Implications:

The LSCB through the City Council and other partner agencies will continue to work to ensure all children and families have access to safeguarding services – particularly those who are less able to communicate due to age, disability, language or for other reasons. One of the key objectives of the LSCB is to improve outcomes for children and young people from diverse communities and groups, and for those who live in deprived geographical communities.

Sustainability Implications:

This report affects the One Planet principle: Health & Happiness. There are actions in place to encourage active, sociable, meaningful lives to promote good health and well being.

Any Other Significant Implications:

The report details health, social care and public health implications.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Full Report
2. LSCB Learning & Improvement Report

