



Learning from a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review

An LCSPR was initiated following an assault on a young person—the review has not been published in full to protect their identity. Key themes identified were the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), support for families who become Special Guardians, safeguarding Looked After Children and how agencies can work together to safeguard effectively.

The following points were identified as learning and recommendations:

- The Special Guardians in this child's case said they felt isolated and ill equipped to support the traumatised children in their care. Special Guardians need effective support to meet the often complex needs of the children they care for.
- The voice of the child needs to be captured in all assessments and plans, with clear use of advocacy support when appropriate
- Agencies supporting LAC need comprehensive training to help them meet the needs of the young people in their care, including understanding of ACEs and CCE/CSE
- Channels of communication between agencies need to be underpinned by clear joint working protocols, particularly regarding a child's mental health issues.
- Practitioners working with vulnerable children need to be trained in Mental Health First Aid and need to know how to apply the principles of Trauma Informed Practice
- Short term interventions should be in place whilst waiting to access specialist support

How can we learn from this case?

Special Guardians need to be provided with practical and emotional support to understand the impact of trauma and build resilience	Commissioners must ensure residential care providers meet agreed standards , including training, and are able to evidence this to LAs
A robust joint working protocol between agencies supporting children's mental health should include risk and need based analysis	The voice of the child must be placed at the centre of all direct work with robust management oversight of assessments and plans

If in doubt, seek advice from your manager or safeguarding lead or contact the SCSP Business Unit on SCSP_Business@sandwell.gov.uk