

Serious Case Review - Child C

Statement of The Independent Child Safeguarding Commissioner

At the outset, I want to pass on my sincere condolences to the family and to thank Child C's mother in particular for the dignified and constructive manner in which she has engaged with this process. We owe it to her and others to ensure that this tragedy and the learning from it makes a tangible difference to the way we work.

Reflecting on the events at the time, it is clear that a range of agencies had access to information that indicated an escalating risk to Child C. For example, they knew he had been excluded from school, was frequently going missing and that intelligence suggested he was being criminally exploited. Indeed, he was seriously assaulted only three months before his murder. However, despite these signs, multi-agency practice lacked a collective focus on Child C's lived experience and whilst it can be said that local procedures were broadly followed, they were clearly insufficient to keep him safe and that is simply not good enough.

I therefore concur with the findings from the case review and accept the recommendations made. I have spoken to the relevant strategic leads in the safeguarding partnership and each has made a personal commitment to drive forward the necessary changes.

Furthermore, the review has exposed a number of other issues that require consideration. The first is the manner in which Child C was permanently excluded from school. Notwithstanding the review's recommendations (2-4), I believe there is further significant learning to be accrued by revisiting and specifically re-examining the governance and oversight of the process that led to exclusion. This may provide critical learning for school governance beyond this individual case.

The second issue relates to alternative education settings and the processes for effective risk assessment, regulation and guidance.

Thirdly, despite Hackney's commitment to contextual safeguarding, there is clear scope for improving how partners collate, analyse and produce collaborative safety plans for vulnerable young people. In Child C's case, this was not apparent.

Looking forward, it is worth noting that the Context Intervention Unit has now been established and that it may provide an opportunity for more effective practice in future. This unit is subject to an independent evaluation commissioned by the Department for Education. I will carefully review this work for evidence of impact.

Finally, it is right that our words acknowledge the lessons that must be learnt, but it is even more important that our actions evidence positive change. I will therefore ensure that the implementation of the recommendations and the additional actions highlighted above are driven at pace and commit to publishing an update within six to nine months.

J Gamble QPM

Independent Child Safeguarding Commissioner

City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership