



Leicestershire and Rutland Children and Adults Safeguarding Boards Building Confidence and Learning Lessons from Serious Case Reviews

Putting Learning into Action

Household

- ✚ Michelle Carter 32 years old
- ✚ Callum Wright 16 years old
- ✚ Katy Carter 6 years old
- ✚ Rob Raynes 60 years old (intermittent resident as mum's boyfriend)

Task

A joint children and adult serious case review was held after Katy (6) died in a house fire.

This case study will give you a basic outline of events and facts leading up to the fatal fire. Under each section there are questions for you to consider and note your thoughts on flipchart paper to be put up for everyone to look at. It is designed for you to discuss the issues with your colleagues on your table. However, you do not need to arrive at a group consensus for any answers or questions.

Part One

- ✚ Knowing when a concern is a concern and taking action.

Callum (16) has left school and is not in employment. He was mainly absent through his final year of formal education. Prior to this he was assessed as having mild learning disabilities and presented behaviour concerns linked to his emotional difficulties. He had been stopped by police for anti-social behaviour throwing stones, verbally abusing neighbours and once for setting fire to a litter bin. School were also aware of Callum physically hitting mum on a few occasions but mum had refused any police contact. In previous years school had attempted to undertake a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) to find support for mum but whilst initially agreeing she always withdrew consent and refused any services.

In the last 12 months Callum had presented to the police as a victim alleging street thefts of cash, mobile phone and trainers. Callum had failed to provide sufficient witness statements for any further action.

Katy is also suspected to have mild learning disabilities and is waiting for an assessment. 6 months before the fire Katy told her teacher about Callum taking 'naughty photos' of her. The school talked to mum who explained it was silly photos of Katy pulling faces and was not concerned. The school also told mum about concerns that Callum had been seen hanging around the school and believed to be smoking 'spliffs'. Mum said she was a bit worried too as he kept coming home with cash saying he'd been helping out a mate selling stuff. Mum said she would talk to Callum about it.

After complaints from neighbours the housing association became aware of a couple domestic violence incidents when mum's boyfriend was visiting.

- ✚ What are the risk factors in this case scenario so far?
- ✚ Who might be at risk?
- ✚ Who should assess the risks?

Part 2

- ✚ Assessing capacity - what are the issues?

Michelle (mum) has learning disabilities struggling with both literacy and numeracy also a longstanding dependency on anti-depressant medication. Michelle reported to the GP that as a child she was sexually abused by her father. The children are out of control, they are 'wild' and she has no energy to do anything (shopping, cleaning). One housing officer did suspect that a neighbour was demanding money from Michelle but never had any evidence of this and Michelle refused to make a formal complaint.

- ✚ Should Michelle be subject to a capacity assessment?
- ✚ If so, what type of assessment?
- ✚ Why and who should undertake it?
- ✚ Who should be talking to whom?

Part 3

Doing More - Have you done enough?

Katy is seen at school playtime to be 'posing' and pretending the boys are taking 'naughty' photos of her. Katy said Callum buys her sweets when she does dancing like Rhianna. The deputy head as designated safeguarding officer talks to children's services and agrees with the teacher to keep monitoring. The teacher is very concerned but doesn't want to upset anyone by talking to anyone else. She talks to mum again who says she'll stop Katy watching music videos. Michelle tells the teacher that her father (the children's grandad) is living with them and Callum will listen to him.

Michelle presents to GP saying she is very depressed and finding it hard to cope with Callum becoming more and more violent at home and the neighbours are constantly complaining. The GP calls adult social services and arranges for her to go in to speak to a social worker.

Michelle does go the appointment and tells the social worker her concerns with Callum and that her dad keeps trying to 'start up' with her again. Michelle's given advice about her rights, safety and telephone support numbers if things get any worse.

Callum presents to the police station complaining he has been sexually assaulted in a park. He is incoherent and police consider him to be under the influence of alcohol. They take him home, tell Michelle and Rob what he is alleging and ask them to return to the station the next day to follow up the complaint.

That night Callum sets fire to his bedroom there are no smoke alarms in the house. Katy dies from smoke inhalation

-  Who could have taken further action?
-  What could have been done?
-  Would you feel confident to speak to a colleague from a different agency?
-  What would you do if no-one took your concerns seriously or took the action that you wanted?