



Introduction:

The East Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership (ESSCP) undertook two Serious Case Reviews (SCR) in 2019, both featuring infant injury. Both SCRs are subject to ongoing criminal investigations, and therefore cannot be published until the conclusion of those investigations. To avoid further delay in dissemination of the learning from these SCRs the ESSCP has developed this briefing on infant injury. Whilst not containing specific details, it will set out the headline learning from both these reviews.

Key features and learning:

- The importance of General Practitioners being part of the Child Protection planning process.
- Recognising and understanding domestic abuse and the risk of both emotional and physical harm to small children.
- Importance of full investigations of all injuries to infants, in line with 'Unexplained injuries to Young Children' procedure.
- Enhanced support for care leavers when they become parents.

What is a Serious Case Review?

A **Serious Case Review** (SCR) is a locally conducted multi-agency **review** in circumstances where a child has been abused or neglected, resulting in serious harm or death, and there is cause for concern as to the way in which the relevant agency or agencies have worked together to safeguard the child.

Since October 2019, these reviews are now called **Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews**. The purpose of a review is to establish whether there are lessons to be learned about the way in which local professionals/agencies work together to safeguard children; identify what needs to be changed and, as a consequence, improve inter-agency working to better safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

- Importance of proactive information seeking and sharing across agencies.
- Full and timely investigations required following an unexpected infant death.
- Professionals having the confidence to challenge families and other professionals.
- The need to explore and understand the role and remit of other professionals working with a family.



Recommendations:

The SCRs identified recommendations to strengthen safeguarding practice:

1. Improvement in practice regarding GP input into CP investigations and conferences.
2. Re-launch the protocol regarding *'Unexplained Injuries to Young Children'* with a focus on the importance of strategy discussions and medicals in such circumstances.
3. Review of the safeguarding policy, procedures and training regarding domestic abuse, to ensure there is enough focus on the risks of physical harm to young children and babies and if there is enough detail regarding how emotional harm may be manifested in younger children.
4. Review whether the current escalation policy is understood across all agencies.
5. The ESSCP to raise, with the relevant regional hospital trusts, the need for immediate CAT scan and reporting alongside full skeletal surveys on infant and young children who have died from unexpected or unexplained causes, and where there are siblings who may need to be safeguarded.
6. Safeguarding Children Partnerships across Sussex to explore how they can use initiatives such as ICON to promote the safe handling of babies.
7. How can the ESSCP and its partner agencies promote cultural change and provide practical support to looked after children and care leavers when they

become parents, and be positive 'corporate grandparents'?

Action taken since the review:

Each agency that contributed to the SCRs identified single agency learning for their Service which forms an action plan. The action plan is overseen by the ESSCP Case Review Group. The following actions are an example of actions already taken:

- ✓ The ESSCP wrote to the Department for Health and Social Care, and the Home Office, to highlight the potential national issue of undertaking CAT scans alongside full skeletal surveys on infant and young children who have died from unexpected or unexplained causes, and where there are siblings who may need to be safeguarded.
- ✓ ICON programme actively being promoted across Sussex.
- ✓ The ESSCP has agreed 'Safeguarding under 5's' as a priority for 2020-2023, covering a number of recommendations from these SCRs.
- ✓ Work is ongoing on a range of actions being undertaken to promote General Practitioners input into investigations and CP conference.



Further Reading and Useful Links:

Serious Case Review Briefings will be held, and detailed learning briefing disseminated, following publication of the full SCR reports.

Pan Sussex Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures:

[Unexplained Injuries to Young Children](#)

When was the last time you used the [Pan Sussex Child Protection and Procedures Manual](#)? You can also [sign up for alerts](#).

[ICON - Babies Cry, You Can Cope](#)



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic we are currently offering limited training. However there are many [Children's Workforce E-Learning](#) opportunities currently available.



ESSCP Contact Us:

01273 481544 www.esscp.org.uk

Email: ESSCP.Contact@eastsussex.gov.uk **you think a child is being harmed or may be at risk of harm**, please contact SPoA Mon-Thursday 8.30am-5pm and Fri 8.30am-4.30pm

Phone: 01323 464222

Email: 0-19.SPOA@eastsussex.gov.uk

If you urgently need help outside of office hours you can contact the **Emergency Duty Service** on **01273 335905** or **01273 335906**.