

During 2019 the MK Together Management Board Commissioned a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review into the death of a new-born baby. The young parents had concealed both the pregnancy and the birth.

What we know about Child D

The pregnancy was concealed from school and family. The only agency to have known about the pregnancy was the local young people's sexual health service. During the review it was ascertained that there were no physical indications to suggest mother was pregnant. Child D's father had been known to several local agencies.

What went well with Child D's Parents

- Mother's school provided a mentor who worked closely with her to support her with her anxiety until she left school.
- Both parents were appropriately referred to CAMHS.
- Following the baby's birth both parents were offered support to help them cope with the baby's death.

Key learning

- There was no communication between Sexual Health and the GP or Children's Services when the mother failed to engage in follow-up attempts.
- The mother only attended one session with CAMHS. The school and GP were not informed by CAMHS of this.
- The GP was not aware of the concerns at school for the mother.
- The importance of collating information about self-harm between different services would have identified that the mother's self-harming behaviour was a safeguarding concern.
- There is no information/pathway for professionals to support identification of concealed pregnancy.
- There was a lack of resources available to support and escalate self-harming behaviour.
- Recognition that adverse childhood experiences as an indicator for early help and follow up.

What have we done?

Since Child D's death, a lot has been done to improve services for young people with emotional health and wellbeing needs:

- The sexual health service has now revised their policy by referring confirmed pregnancies to GPs where the teenage mother disengages or fails to respond to follow up appointments/repeated calls.
- A self-harm toolkit has been completed and made available to all secondary schools.

All agencies are responsible for disseminating this learning to their staff members and making the relevant changes to practice within their setting

What is there still to do?

- Provide better resources to schools and other universal services to identify and respond to concealed pregnancy
- Roll out self-harm toolkit to all universal settings to assist and inform professionals on how to identify and respond to potential concealed pregnancies.
- Ensure agencies update schools, GPs and referrers when young people present with further safeguarding concerns including eating disorders and/or disengage from support.
- Provide better support to schools to raise awareness of concealed pregnancy.
- The Partnership will consult partner agencies to develop guidance/policy on concealed and denied pregnancies to strengthen local safeguarding multi-agency procedures.

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