

7 Minute Briefing – Ava

Resources

Safeguarding Partnership Board Website- Child Neglect Resources
<https://www.safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk/children-board/professionals/child-neglect/>

Pre-Birth Protocol [Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Pre-birth Protocol | Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board \(safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk\)](https://www.safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk/children-board/professionals/child-neglect/)

Graded Care Profile [Assessing child neglect with the Graded Care Profile | Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board \(safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk\)](https://www.safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk/children-board/professionals/child-neglect/)

Clutter Tool
[safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk/download/clutter-index-rating-cir-tool/?wpdmdl=22384&refresh=67ea5a8cc48b41743411852](https://www.safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk/download/clutter-index-rating-cir-tool/?wpdmdl=22384&refresh=67ea5a8cc48b41743411852)

Partners in the relationship

In this case the partner was known to agencies, but the consideration of risk did not change when he was arrested and charged with sexual offences against children. Responsibility was put on the mother to supervise any contact. Information was then received from a sibling that the partner was back at the address. Agencies addressed this risk again by placing the emphasis on the mother to supervise contact.

Professionals should consider how to mitigate the risks in relation to partners offending/violent/ sexualised behaviours and to ask the partner how they are going to keep their behaviours in check to safeguard the child. Practitioners should not place the burden of managing the risk solely on the mother, other supportive measures and if necessary, interventions need to be considered to safeguard the child.

Face to Face Assessment

Where possible it is important to ensure that antenatal care is provided through **face-to-face** contact with the mother. This is to enable a full assessment to be undertaken of the mother, the family's circumstances and the home environment. In this case Covid restrictions prevented in person contact and knowledge about the mother's miscarriage was unknown until a much later date.

Third Party Referrals / Strategy Discussions

- Third party child protection referrals should be considered as part of the holistic assessment of a case.
- It is important that strategy discussions take place in a timely fashion to ensure the safety of the child and to plan for support and intervention

Background

Ava is a two-year-old girl and is one of five children, who have three different fathers. Ava was born in April 2020 during the first national lockdown due to the covid pandemic. Ante -natal contact was by telephone due to the restrictions imposed by the lockdown, therefore there was no assessment of the home environment.

In December 2020, the school which Ava's siblings attended reported concerns of extremely poor home conditions, potential parental substance misuse and neglect of the children. A Child and Family Assessment was completed, which highlighted that Ava had not been registered with a General Practitioner (GP).

In March 2022, Children's Social Care (CSC) requested police to undertake an urgent safe and well visit. On attendance the police found Ava in a neglected state. Ava and her siblings were safeguarded under police protection powers and the mother and father arrested for child neglect. At hospital Ava was found to have sores from lack of care, nappy changes and urine burns. All the children were found to be very hungry.

Management Oversight

It is important that child safeguarding professionals receive **regular supportive supervision and management oversight**. This ensures that issues such as parents not engaging with professionals and children not being registered with a GP and the impact of covid (**practitioners not having sight of the child**) are considered in terms of risk to the child and the need for safeguarding referrals to be made.

Assessment

Where a child protection referral contain concerns about an unborn baby's safety in relation to known familial historical concerns a **pre-birth assessment** should be considered.

Once Ava was born concerns were raised, including the father being charged with offences of sexual activity with a child and Ava not being registered with a GP. In this case the author highlighted that the assessment should have focused on what was known about the family's historical child neglect and the baby not being registered with a GP alongside insight into the father's risk and pending criminal investigation. It is important **not to lose sight of all** the potential child abuse **risk factors**.

