

Essex Safeguarding Children Board

Child LL – Learning summary

Background

Child LL died aged 2 months. Mother and baby were staying with relatives at the time. It appeared that Mother fell asleep whilst holding the baby shortly after feeding.

Mother was 17 at the time of Child LL's birth and had been known to services throughout her childhood.

Key Learning Points

The impact of childhood trauma

Mother had been known to CAMHS and Social Care since primary school age. There had been a number of traumatic experiences in her childhood, including a close bereavement and both physical and mental health issues within the family.

There was no pre-birth assessment so mother's adverse childhood experiences and support needs for when the baby arrived were not assessed.

Safer sleep

Child LL had been sleeping in a pushchair whilst Mother and baby were staying with relatives, however after feeding it appeared Mother fell asleep still holding the baby and inadvertently smothered baby.

Child LL would sleep in a Moses basket at their usual family home.

Resources:

- [The Lullaby Trust - 'How to sleep away from home with a baby'](#)
- [ESCB Website – Safer Sleep](#)

Voice of the family

Following the referral for a Pre-birth assessment, Grandmother told Social Care she would supporting Mother with baby, however there was no assessment of Grandmother or her capacity to do this.

Grandmother had refused to give consent to Social Care on many occasions throughout Mother's life, it was not clear if it had ever been established why this was.

Mother and Grandmother also had a difficult relationship, which may account for why Mother and Child LL were staying with relatives at the time of Child LL's death.

[ESCB Website – Think Family](#)

Pre-birth assessments

The case was referred for a pre-birth assessment by Midwifery, however Social care did not progress it to an assessment the decision was not explained or challenged.

Whilst this may not have changed the outcome for Child LL, it would have enabled an assessment of what support could be offered to Mother, assess her capabilities to parent, any potential risks to the baby, and offered advice around safe sleeping.

Resources:

- [Multi-agency protocol for Pre-birth assessments](#)
- [SET Child Protection Procedures, Chapter 11 Resolving Professional Disagreements](#)