



OSCB
Oxfordshire
Safeguarding
Children Board

Child Safeguarding Practice Review: Jacob

Lara Patel, CEF Deputy Director for
Safeguarding.
March 2021

Process – methodology

- Commissioned March 2020
- COVID19 – an online, virtual CSPR
- Family Involvement
- 3 key lines of enquiry
- Learning events & feedback

The Report

- Title “ Untouchable Worlds”
- Summary with analysis not descriptive detail
- Family & professional participation & collaboration

Jacob's Story (July 2017 - April 2019)

“Nothing changed to keep Jacob safe”

- Range of statutory and voluntary services / significant number of professionals
- A child that lived at home (shared care) and in care
- Not on roll and not in education for 22 months
- Extensive police records for alleged offending behaviours that did not meet threshold to be placed before the courts
- Significant physical injuries
- Assessed as being a risk to himself and others
- Drug and alcohol use not fully known
- Repeatedly missing from home and care
- Family and professionals held the view risk came from community, cannot determine with reasonable certainty he intended to end his life

The report found.....

- Some good practice – relationship based; risks & information shared; addressing sufficiency of placements
- Criminal Exploitation – he was significantly harmed and exploited
- The Education System – Jacob was let down
- Working together – was fragmented and did not achieve positive change

Key Learning: Criminal exploitation

A system designed to support those working with criminal exploitation must:

- Ensure safer communities which keep a relentless focus on disrupting perpetrators and networks
- Consider the child's home in the local community and assess what other places might be needed to ensure their physical and psychological safety
- Support professionals to build relationships with children and understand their world
- Act upon critical and reachable moments in a child's life
- Consider the significance of gender in working with exploited children

Key Learning: Criminal exploitation

Practitioners should:

- Know the risk factors and predictability
 - Understand the significance of a child's identity within their community networks when assessing levels of risk
 - Manage risk via multi-agency assessments, plans and contingency
 - Ensure the right support to help families and manage the risks together
-
- Review the role and function of the National Referral Mechanism
 - Have a national drive and agenda for children at risk of exploitation

Key Learning: Education

The Education System must ensure:

- The paramount importance of the role of schools in keeping children safe
- An education package is put in place in a timely manner
- Children not in education/not on a school roll are known and action is swift

Key Learning: Working Together

- Involve ALL the local safeguarding system
- Effective discussions at all levels of seniority which result in collective responsibility
- Robust systems which facilitate resolution when opinions differ
- A shared language across the partnership

Review Recommendations: National

1. The National Panel to acknowledge and share this Review with key organisations and agencies to inform national policy and practice
2. DfE to acknowledge this Review / look at effectiveness of ESFA / statute & guidance to local areas re: governance of academy schools
3. DfE to undertake a review of national placement sufficiency

Review Recommendations: Local

One local recommendation linked to the three key lines addressed through three system wide action plans

- Child exploitation
- Education
- Working together

What we have done already

Tackling Criminal Exploitation

- Set up a new multi-agency countywide Youth Justice and Exploitation Service
- Established county wide missing and exploitation panels and networks
- Developed a Joint Panel between the police and youth justice service for children where there are both risks of offending and safeguarding concerns
- Regular training for staff in exploitation

What we have done already

Tackling Criminal Exploitation

Across Oxfordshire we now have

- Operational Multi-agency Risk Meetings chaired by senior police officer
- Use of police data-driven tools to identify young people at risk
- Extensive enforcement operations against county lines, connected to MPS and WMP

What we have done already

The Education System

- Tightened up all systems to ensure timely practice where children are not in education/not on a school roll including through a new multi-agency panel
- Plans in place to improve in year admissions processes to schools where children have been excluded from school or need to change schools

What we have done already

Working Together

- Developing whole system approaches to early help, managing the Front Door and safeguarding services closely linked to the new Youth Justice and Exploitation Service
- Working with the University of Bedfordshire to improve our contextual safeguarding offer

THANK YOU

