

## **P R E S S   R E L E A S E**

Ref no: BSCB 2017-18/01

Issued: On Request

### **Publication of learning from a Serious Case Review**

**Date: Thursday, 19<sup>th</sup> December 2019**

#### **Details:**

Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) has published a Serious Case Review into the death of Teri-Rae Palmer, who was only 2 months old when she died on the 2nd January 2017. Teri-Rae sustained multiple rib fractures prior to her death. At this time, she was living with her mother, Abigail Palmer, in Solihull.

Teri-Rae was subject of a multi-agency Child Protection Plan from birth due to concerns based on her mother's past parenting difficulties, problems with alcohol and substance misuse and previous abusive relationships. During her brief life she was seen frequently by health and social work professionals in Birmingham and Solihull, and was consistently viewed as making good progress and being well cared for. Teri-Rae was last seen by a social worker on Friday, 30<sup>th</sup> December 2016 when an unannounced visit was carried out.

In April 2019, Abigail was found guilty of manslaughter and two counts of grievous bodily harm and received a custodial sentence of 13-and-a-half years.

The independent review commissioned by Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership found that *"there was no information or evidence available to agencies and professionals involved at the time which would have led them to be able to predict the tragic outcome in this case. The mother must take full responsibility for the tragic death of her baby."*

Penny Thompson CBE, Independent Chair, Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership, said *"Nothing can change the dreadfully sad outcome for Teri-Rae. However, as with all such cases, organisations and professionals involved are determined to learn from these events. As a Safeguarding Partnership this is one of our main purposes, with all organisations acting quickly to implement the learning from this case. We have already made a number of positive changes to improve partnership practice and cross-boundary transfer arrangements."*

*"This tragedy underlines the challenge that professionals face in establishing relationships with vulnerable people, especially those who have addictions, with the purpose of helping them to become good parents. Professionals have to establish trust*

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*and yet remain curious, sceptical even, always clearly focussed on the needs of the dependent child, especially one so young. Professionals working with parents who have addictions cannot rely solely on assurances of abstinence but should seek evidence of positive change.”*

**ENDS**

### **Note to editors**

The purpose of an SCR is to establish whether any lessons can be learnt by professional services to help ensure children are better protected in future.

The SCR is published on the Partnership website ([lscpbirmingham.org.uk/serious-cases](http://lscpbirmingham.org.uk/serious-cases)). A copy can be downloaded from the table on the webpage: Case Reference BSCB2017-18/01. A copy has been forwarded to the National Case Review Repository hosted by the NSPCC.

If you are concerned about a child living in **Birmingham**, please ring the Children's Advice and Support Service on 0121 303 1888.

If you are concerned about a child living in **Solihull**, please ring the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 0121 788 4300.