

management of children have been addressed in order to understand any current Issues. All this information needs to be available when foster carers apply to adopt.

#### **What are the practice implications for me?**

When assessing foster carers ensure that a full history has been taken and the foster carers attitudes and motivation have been considered. If a foster carer applies to adopt a child, all information about them as a foster carer must be considered.

4. When representing the interests of children in court proceedings, assessment and direct work should be child focussed and sufficiently robust in order to expose any potential abuse.

#### **What are the practice implications for me?**

Children's Guardians must ensure that any work that is undertaken is robust and takes into consideration the possibility of ongoing abuse of children

A professionals summary of the Serious Case Review is available from:

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## **HIGHLIGHTING LESSONS FROM CHILD V SERIOUS CASE REVIEW**

### **SYNOPSIS**

V was made subject of a care order in 2004 as a result of suffering severe neglect whilst living with her birth mother, she was then aged 7. Over the years there had been numerous referrals regarding the neglectful state of the house, her mothers' excessive drinking, unknown men visiting the home, untreated head lice, as well as poor nursery and school attendance.

In August 2003 she was placed with a couple who had been carers for the local Authority since 1986. She settled in very well and the couple subsequently adopted her in April 2006.

Over a period of three years V attended her GP on several occasions as a result of urinary infections. This information appears not to have been communicated to other professionals or the Children's Guardian, who was representing her interests in Court.

Although not directly related to V during her placement there were reports of four other looked after children going missing from the foster home.

The SCR was held as a result of her being sexually abused by her adoptive father from 2005. The abuse only came to light when an older adopted young adult witnessed the abuse.

Whilst V was in her placement she did not express any concern to her Social Worker or anyone else about the care she was receiving.

When she knew her carers wanted to adopt her she was very keen for the process to be completed so that she could become part of the family

### **THE SCR CONCLUDED**

"There was no point at which, on the evidence available, it could have been concluded that the foster carers should have been de-registered as foster carers, and specifically there was no indication that she was at risk of sexual abuse in their care"

### **LESSONS LEARNED**

#### **These lessons apply to ALL agencies**

1. The long term effects of early childhood neglect must not be underestimated. Professionals cannot assume that a positive improvement in a child's presentation is an indicator that underlying damage has healed.

#### **What are the practice implications for me?**

Professionals must ensure that they are still vigilant for signs of abuse when children are looked after

2. It is crucial that information about a looked after child's health is communicated between GP, foster carers, the LAC nurse and social workers in order to note any regular patterns of attendance which could indicate concerns.

#### **What are the practice implications for me?**

Professionals must ensure that information about a looked after child is regularly communicated

3. Assessments of foster carers should assess all key factors in their history in order to understand how such factors could affect attitudes and motivation. Subsequently reviews need also to include an assessment of how any historical concerns about the