



Learning Lessons Briefing 'Aaron'

The Review

Background Summary:

Aaron was 15 days old when he tragically passed away in 2025. Aaron and his siblings were open to Strengthening Families due to homelessness and other concerns, including poor engagement with services, school attendance issues, and a history of domestic abuse, poor mental health, and substance misuse.

The SUDI process initially found no suspicious circumstances, but toxicology tests identified evidence of cocaine exposure in Aaron's blood. Aaron's caregiver was arrested and bailed pending criminal investigations.

Learning:

- **Temporary Accommodation Vulnerabilities:** There was not enough recognition of the significant vulnerability caused by temporary accommodation and housing instability.
- **School Attendance and Education:** Persistent school non-attendance was seen as an education problem and not a safeguarding issue, despite there being other evidence of neglect present.
- **Cumulative Harm and Non-Engagement:** The family's broader history, cumulative harm, and continued lack of engagement were not always considered.
- **Professional Curiosity:** There was a need for greater professional curiosity to understand the families lived experience and the impact of homelessness.

Recommendations:

1. **Chronology and Cumulative Harm:** Importance of maintaining thorough chronologies to support identifying and assessing cumulative harm, with attention to daily lived experience, long-term patterns and risks.
2. **Non-Engagement as a Safeguarding Concern:** Need to determine when family non-engagement escalates to a safeguarding issue.
3. **School Non-Attendance:** Consideration should be given to severe school non-attendance being seen as evidence of neglect, particularly when there are other risks factors present.

How can you make a difference?

Key messages from the learning to ask yourself for your practice are: -

- *Can I make changes to improve my own practice?*
- *Do I need to seek further support, training, or supervision?*