



Child BB was two years old when she tragically died in hospital from physical injuries she sustained.

Following the conclusion of the police investigation, the child's mother and her partner were charged with Causing or Allowing the Death of a Child and Causing or Allowing the Serious Physical Harm to a Child. Shortly before the date of the trial, mother's partner committed suicide. The trial was postponed and when it concluded it resulted in the child's mother being found Not Guilty.

In March 2017, the Coroner determined that an inquest would not be held. There is therefore, no finding as to how the child might have suffered the fatal injuries.

A Serious Case Review (SCR) was commissioned and one of the objectives was to consider the role of multi-agency partners and especially working across counties. Having examined all aspects of the report, I fully concur with the SCR author's findings, namely that none of the agencies that had contact with this family were aware of any concerns about the child's wellbeing nor were they aware that the mother was in a relationship with a man with a history of domestic violence and allegation of ill treatment of children. There were therefore, no actions that those agencies could have taken to protect the child.

Whilst the SCR report identified good practice, it also welcomed the actions planned by Surrey and Bedfordshire agencies as listed in paragraph 9.2. The report also exposed a need for consideration to be given to how mothers can be alerted to the need for caution when engaging in new relationships with previously unknown men, potentially with emphasis on relationships made through internet dating sites and social media.

This concern crosses boundaries and the author has recommended, and I fully concur with this recommendation, that it is referred for national consideration and action.

I am confident that the multi-agency partners on the Board are committed to seeking out every opportunity to learn and improve. I will be working with them to ensure that when lessons are identified, we move the recommendations forward with the urgency they require.

Elaine Coleridge Smith
SSCB Independent Chair