

Case Study Baby Olivia

Olivia suffered several bumps and injuries to the head. She was five months old when she was taken to hospital by her mother and maternal grandmother. She had been dropped onto a laminate floor from a height of approximately four feet. The baby was examined. Skeletal surveys and x rays were not undertaken, and a safeguarding referral wasn't made.

Two weeks later the Health Visitor raised concerns to the social care Practice Manager about an injury to Olivia. She had a large bump to the side of her head just above her left ear. It was unclear as to how this injury had been caused.

It was then discovered that Olivia's mother and her grandmother had taken her to the GP surgery a few days earlier and had seen a GP regarding the bump. No further tests had been suggested and a safeguarding referral wasn't made.

The Practice Manager put in a safeguarding referral to the MASH. As a result of the referral the baby was taken to hospital. The hospital undertook some tests, and it was discovered she had a small fracture to her skull at the injury site and a swelling. The injury was consistent with a fall or blow to the head. No other injury was found.

A strategy meeting was convened at the hospital and it was agreed that Olivia should not return to the family home. The strategy meeting revealed that the baby's mother had significant mental health and had been seeing an allocated mental health social worker. There was a concern regarding a lack of bonding between the mother and the baby and Olivia was primarily being cared for by her maternal grandmother.

Summary of Learning

- The need to ensure that all practitioners remain actively engaged in cases and that they continually review and analyse the threshold for risk and significant harm.
- Signs and indicators of perinatal mental health.
- Head injuries in babies should always be a red flag for a referral to a paediatrician.
- Health records and documentation need to be clear about safeguarding concerns and give details of any need to investigate further and/or refer.

Update on Baby Olivia

Olivia is now under the provision of a Special Guardianship Order (SGO). She is being well cared for and has been observed by the social worker and described as very relaxed, exploring her environment, and interacting well.