

Child YY – 7 Minute Briefing

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In mid-2024, Child YY was taken out of the UK by their father and grandmother while waiting for a Family Court decision on care arrangements. YY had suffered severe neglect while in the care of their mother, who struggled with chronic alcohol dependency. YY's mother separated from father following allegations of domestic abuse and sexual assault. 	<p>What went well</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-birth and peri-natal services were responsive and diligent in following up missed appointments. Health Visiting (HV) services were responsive; it was excellent Harrow HV's retained responsibility after the move to an out of borough hostel. Drug & Alcohol services showed exceptional commitment and dedication in working with YY's mother. The Police effectively located YY and their mother following a tip off from a concerned citizen (concerning maternal intoxication). Harrow CSC worked well with Police to protect YY and showed ingenuity and flexibility working with Romanian authorities.
<p>Family background</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> YY's mother (now deceased) was Lithuanian; YY's father is Romanian. Both parents came to the UK under EU freedom of movement conditions. Father was granted settled status, but YY's mother never applied, leaving her with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF). Mother misused multiple substances and alcohol and had been in treatment intermittently since 2020. Child YY was born in late 2022. 	
<p>Family History & Child Protection Arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> July 22: Harrow CSC recommended a Child and Family Assessment (CFA) be completed after YY's mother booked her pregnancy late and was assessed as being at high risk. YY's mother did not participate in this assessment with Harrow CSC. Sept 22 – Feb 23: After moving to another local authority, YY's mother did participate in a CFA with the local Children's Social Care (CSC), who then ended their involvement with the family. YY was re-referred to this other local authority for a CFA at the end of 2022, as YY was born. Feb 23: YY's mother returned to Harrow. YY was initially made subject to a Child In Need Plan in April 23. YY was then made subject to a Child Protection Plan in mid-2023, due to escalating concern that YY's mother was misusing multiple substances. Aug 23: YY's mother alleged domestic abuse and sexual assault against YY's father. YY's mother and baby YY were placed in a hostel in West London. Sept 23: YY's mother found by Police, heavily intoxicated due to alcohol misuse with Child YY suffering from severe neglect. YY was made subject to Police Protection and placed with foster parents under an Interim Care Order. YY's grandmother travelled from Romania to look after YY under a Special Guardianship Order, with YY transferred to her care in Apr 24. July 24: The Family Court suspended a final decision on care arrangements, pending queries regarding grandmother's immigration status. YY's grandmother and father took YY from the UK to Romania. Harrow CSC now working with Romanian colleagues to normalise YY's care in Romania. 	<p>Learning Issues and what we are doing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The allegations of sexual assault were not handled by a specialist Police team. Forensic opportunities were not explored. Specialist support for YY's mother was not available. The Police now have a new specialist team. YY's mother's NRPF status meant placement in an unsuitable hostel, offering her and YY little support and protection. The Home Office have agreed to support our training on NRPF. YY's father was insufficiently considered in some of the assessment procedures. This is being taken forward through a new unborn baby procedure (see below). There were instances of information not being shared that should have due to misunderstanding about the need for consent. Harrow's L&D team will develop training. The use of interpreters to support the family was inconsistent. There was too much early optimism about YY's mother's capacity to protect YY, given alcohol and drug problems. Harrow now has a new system for unborn babies. Our understanding of how the Romanian community understands child protection processes requires development. We intend to address this through the HSCP Outreach Hub.