

**Statement on behalf of Bron Sanders, independent chair of Kirklees  
Safeguarding Children Board**

This Serious Case Review relates to a child aged two years and seven months who was found dead in the family home in February 2010.

It is a very difficult case involving a parent with a history of mental health issues but who was known to care well for her child before her condition deteriorated extremely quickly and with tragic consequences.

As part of a criminal investigation, the mother later pleaded guilty to manslaughter due to diminished responsibility.

She was subsequently admitted to a secure unit in hospital under the Mental Health Act (1983).

In order to give a thorough background of the family's contact with local agencies, the Serious Case Review covers a period of almost 10 years dating back to the mother's first psychotic episode.

The review highlights many examples of good practice and we agree that the case's outcome was not the result of any systemic failures. At the same time, we acknowledge that more could, and should, have been done to prevent the case from reaching crisis point.

In particular, we acknowledge that two professionals who visited the family home in the hours before the child died, but who were denied access by the mother, did not follow agreed procedures by seeing the child.

Having been denied access, the two workers felt that to insist on seeing the child at that particular time may have been detrimental to the mother's mental health.

It cannot be known whether different actions would have resulted in a different outcome. However, we can be clear that all Serious Case Reviews are a vital means of highlighting areas for improvement which, in turn, help agencies to continue developing the ways in which they safeguard children.

All key agencies completed Individual Management Reviews as a result of this case. These were carried out with independent authors and looked openly and critically at where improvements could be made.

Today we are also publishing an action plan to show how different agencies have responded to the recommendations in the report. All recommendations have been carried out.

Changes have been made to working practices, including work to better focus attention on children's needs and updated training for conducting home visits and dealing with emergency situations.

Many different agencies were involved in this case and our shared commitment to safeguarding children has never been stronger.

**Bron Sanders**  
**Independent Chair, Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board**