

The Khyra Ishaq Case Study

**How can a child die of starvation in
Birmingham during the 21st Century?**



Serving our communities, protecting them from harm





Operation Versa

West Midlands Police

Chief Inspector Sean Russell





Aim

- ◆ Improve Trust and Confidence within the communities which we serve through effective safeguarding.
- ◆ Share good practice.
- ◆ Learn the lessons from a challenging investigation.



Incident

Report of Child Death

- ◆ 0544hrs - 17th May 2008 at 36 Leyton Road, Handsworth.
- ◆ 0620hrs – Child pronounced dead
- ◆ 5 other children within household placed into Police Protection



So why is this case different?

- ◆ Cause of death
- ◆ Surviving children
- ◆ Historical abuse – step father
- ◆ Organisational processes
- ◆ Mental Health
- ◆ Community

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Adults within the household

Mother – Angela Gordon (36yrs)



Step Father- Junaid Abuhamza (34yrs)





Historical Abuse

- ◆ Junaid Abuhamza
- ◆ Childhood experience
- ◆ Reviews undertaken
 - Coroners file
 - Social Care files



Surviving Children

- ◆ 5 Children - ages 12,11,9,8,4
- ◆ Interviews
- ◆ Children victims of abuse
- ◆ Food



Surviving Children

- ◆ Schooling
- ◆ Punishments
- ◆ Exclusion
- ◆ Development

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City girl 'starved'

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adjourned and the couple are now due to appear before Birmingham Crown Court on next Wednesday.

A Birmingham Mail source said today: "The girl was apparently starved to death by her mum and step-dad."

"She also has five other siblings who had to be taken to hospital."

A West Midlands Police spokesman today confirmed the incident and said officers were working with the social services department at Birmingham City Council.

A council spokesman added: "We are deeply saddened by the death of this child and our sympathies go to the child's family and friends at this difficult time."

"This death is now the subject of a police enquiry and the council is fully supporting their investigation. As a result we are unable to make any further comment."

Couple 'deliberately starved 7-year-old daughter'

Birmingham A seven-year-old girl died after being "quite deliberately" starved by her mother and stepfather for many months, a court was told (Rosemary Bennett writes).

Khyra Ishaq died of an infection in May 2008 after being kept a virtual prisoner in her home and deprived of food. Doctors involved said they had never seen anyone so emaciated.

Five other children were "similarly starved" and were lucky to be alive, Birmingham Crown Court was told. Two of the other children, none of whom can be identified, were in a state of acute, severe and dangerous malnutrition when Khyra died.

Details of the children's condition were revealed by Timothy Raggatt, for the prosecution, as he opened the case against Angela Gordon, Khyra's mother, and her partner Junaid Abuhamza. They both deny murder.

Ms Gordon, 35, denies five counts of cruelty alleged to have been committed between December 2007 and May 2008. Abuhamza, 31, has pleaded guilty.

Jurors were shown photos of the inside of the house in Handsworth, including pictures of a well-stocked kitchen and a cane used as part of a "punishment regime". They were told that the kitchen was kept locked so the children could not get to the food. The trial continues.





Professionals

- Schools
- Social Services
- Education Otherwise
- Police
- Health Visitors
- GP / Hospitals / Mental Health Trust
- Housing



Community

- ◆ Diverse / Transient
- ◆ Language barriers
- ◆ Lack of community
- ◆ Closed door mentality

Findings

Mother



- ◆ 15 Years custodial sentence for Manslaughter and 5 offences of child cruelty
- ◆ Prohibited from working with children

Findings

Step Father



- ◆ 15 years custodial sentence for Manslaughter and 5 offences of child cruelty
- ◆ IPP granted
- ◆ Prohibited from working with children



Lessons

- Don't be afraid to challenge
- Remember the triggers DA / MH / DR
- Remember siblings in the jigsaw
- Decision / Rationale

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**What do these little children
all have in common?**



Physical

Emotional

What was the
child saying to
us!!

Intellectual

Social



What is my role?

- ◆ Be professionally curious
- ◆ Think Sympathetically
- ◆ Be a compassionate cynic
- ◆ A B C
- ◆ GRIP
- ◆ Don't be afraid to challenge

Any Questions?

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