

1 Arthur Labinjo-Hughes (6) and Star Hobson (18 months) were both killed by a parent's partner with the collusion of their parent in 2020. There were multiple concerns raised about both children to social care professionals by family members which were reported as 'malicious' by professionals. Both ended their days isolated from family members who really loved them. Arthur and Star were both murdered by Women. Arthur had in excess of 130 bruises and Star had 38 separate injuries.



2 Services involved too readily accepted parents self-report of the children. Concerns were raised by family members who had physical evidence of bruises. There was no consistent way to forward these concerns onto appropriate services to ensure all were informed.

Family members were side-lined and their concerns apparently minimised.



3 Both Children had home visits from Social Workers in response to concerns about physical injuries, they raised no safeguarding concerns? The homes did not show obvious signs of neglect, the home was comfortable and tidy but the lived experience for the children was alarmingly different.



4 Concerns about domestic abuse were raised in respect of both couples.

More was known about both Parents partners with Arthurs step mother having a history of mental health issues and domestic abuse. Stars Mothers partner also had a history of domestic violence.

A Child Safeguarding Practice Review was completed looking at both children's history and involvement of services and identified failings where the agencies involved had not protected the children.



5 Failings identified included:

Lack of collaboration, trust and information -sharing between agencies involved. Very poor communication between agencies and professionals working with children and young people.

Thresholds for interventions and support too high.

(Considering Arthur was in need of emotional and psychological support following the incarceration of his Mother, it is surprising that support was not in place)

7 Recommendations from the report focus on greater governance in multi-agency working driving Safeguarding forward.

A set of UK wide standards for child protection meaning an increase in consistency, a greater understanding of expectations and an increase in the effectiveness of professional challenge.

More understanding of domestic abuse is needed and domestic abuse professionals to be brought into MASH.

A greater emphasis on the use of data to protect the vulnerable.



6 Further issues identified were

Thresholds of expectations regarding parents' and carers' care of children by agencies was too low.

Focus on parents' and carers' needs distracted professionals from seeing and hearing the voice of the child.

