



CASE SCENARIO - DAISY

Notification criteria

Ingestion of methadone (child death).

Age

2 years

Theme

Neglect, missed appointments, parental substance misuse, voice of the child.

Case Scenario

Daisy was the youngest of five children. She was described by a number of professionals as lively and sociable. When Daisy was two years old, an ambulance was called to her home, and on arrival she was found to be blue, not breathing and in cardiac arrest. Paramedics commenced resuscitation.

The crew were informed by the family that Daisy had consumed some of her mother's, Chloe's, methadone. There was a suspicion that there was a delay in seeking medical attention. Her mother had attempted to make Daisy vomit before she lost consciousness.

Daisy had been born at home, but was subsequently admitted to the hospital for a paediatric assessment, as she had a cleft lip, a tremor, and a raised temperature. She was diagnosed with neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS), requiring medical treatment to aid her withdrawal.

Both parents were engaged in a drug treatment programme, with known

intermittent substance misuse episodes. There were reports of three domestic abuse incidents that were reported to Children's Social Care by the Police.

Substance misuse services reported concerns that Chloe continued the use of illicit methadone in addition to her prescribed prescription. Chloe was asked to come in to collect her prescriptions to ensure that she was seen by staff.

Following the methadone ingestion, Daisy was transferred to the local emergency department, and died shortly after arrival. At the time of Daisy's death her parents were separated.

All professionals had observed good bonding and relationships between parents and children.

The family had contact with 21 different health services and there was consistent poor attendance at health appointments for all the children, some of whom had significant health needs. The parents had a history of delaying or not seeking medical attention for the children when required.

There were 16 referrals to Children's Social Care, 7 initial assessments and 1 core assessment. There were also low level concerns for attendance at school and varying views of home conditions. There were further reports from professionals, at different times, about the home cleanliness, heating, lack of furniture and general concerns about the condition of the house. At other times all was well.

The children were on enhanced health visiting support, and shortly before the incident, the health visitor made a failed home visit. She sent Chloe a text and offered a visit.