



CASE SCENARIO - KIERAN

Notification criteria

Physical injury (child death).

Age

6 years

Theme

Domestic violence and coercive control, physical abuse.

Case Scenario

Kieran was a well cared for six-year-old boy who suffered severe damage to his brain, had abdominal bleeding and bruises to his face and later died in hospital.

Anna, his mother, was described as an attentive parent who responded to his needs and encouraged him to learn and develop. He was meeting his developmental milestones, apart from his speech, and was making good progress at school.

He was always clean, well dressed and well groomed. Staff at the school, who knew him well, had no worries about him or his care.

Anna was granted a one-year student visa, but when this expired she remained in the UK as an 'overstayer'. The terms of her visa stated that she had no recourse to public funds (NRPF). Kieran was assessed to be a 'Child in Need' under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 so that support could be provided to Anna with her immigration status, and temporary accommodation was provided for her and

Kieran.

In the past, the Police had carried out a welfare check, following an anonymous telephone call reporting a domestic disturbance at the home. Kieran's father explained he was only visiting as he had recently separated from Anna. A police merlin report was completed and advised that Kieran's father was not to have direct contact with Anna, but there were no restrictions on having contact with Kieran.

The health visitor had supervision and was advised to find out about the addresses where Anna and Kieran were residing. Anna informed the health visitor that she was due to spend a few days at Kieran's father's house. The health visitor made a record of this, but did not share the information. Anna was then transferred to the NRP team. On a following visit to the house where Anna and Kieran were staying, the social worker was informed that they were staying with a friend.

Subsequently, Kieran started nursery, but they were unaware of Children's Social Care involvement or that he was on a Child in Need (CIN) plan. His father regularly collected Kieran from nursery.

Anna's initial application to the home office was declined, however, with letters of support from the GP and social worker, she was granted leave to remain. She was supported to move into privately rented accommodation.

A neighbour encouraged Anna to write to a friend called Ben, after Ben initiated contact with her in a handwritten letter from prison. They exchanged several letters, but his calls and letters were only monitored for the first month of his stay in prison. Anna said that her 'boyfriend' begged her to go and see him in prison and she visited him several times before his release.

When Ben was released from prison, a probation officer saw him and there was a discussion about living in approved premises (AP). Ben was recalled to prison after being sentenced for common assault against his previous partner. He was described as being 'high risk of harm to previous and future partners'.

There were no restrictions on visits or letters in prison. The probation officer was unaware of Anna's visits, so did not alert Children's Social Care, who would have completed checks in relation to Kieran.

When released from prison, Ben was on licence to the National Probation Service, followed by post-sentence supervision.

There were several conditions attached to his licence, including:

- No unsupervised contact with under 16s without the prior approval of the supervising officer and social services;
- Attendance at an offending behaviour programme, including a domestic abuse programme, as directed by the supervising officer;
- Agreement to notify the supervising officer of any developing relationships with women.

The probation officer sought managerial advice to discuss:

- Ben's failed appointments;

- The fact he refused to give an address of where he was living;
- That there was a high risk of domestic violence;
- The suspicion that he was living with his partner and her child (Kieran).

At this point, he could not be recalled to prison as the licence period had ended and he was the subject of post-sentence supervision. It was agreed that he should be returned to court for failing to attend appointments. This was not proceeded with, as he later produced medical certificates for the absences.

Ben continued to meet with the probation officer who stressed the need for him to attend these appointments, so that they could do some focused work on domestic violence. It was recorded that Ben had shown some insight, but that his motivation was not completely genuine.

Ben failed to attend his appointment, but the probation officer decided not to send him a warning letter as he felt that they had developed a working relationship now, and a warning letter might damage this.

Four days later, Ben assaulted Kieran who was taken to hospital and died two days later. He was later convicted of Kieran's murder and sentenced to life imprisonment. Anna was unaware of his violent past.