



7 MINUTE BRIEFING

LCSPR: HOPE

This case study is about a six-year-old girl called Hope. In November 2023, Hope fell from an upstairs window at home, resulting in severe injuries. This briefing aims to share important learning about race and culture in child safeguarding.

Safeguarding Black, Asian and Mixed Heritage children

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About Hope

Hope lived with her birth mother, her sibling and half-sibling. Hope and her siblings have a dual-heritage background, with a white British mother and Black African Caribbean fathers.

Hope and her siblings were receiving support through a Child Protection Plan due to concerns of emotional abuse. Five months into that support, Hope fell from an upstairs window at the home, resulting in severe injuries.

Following the incident, Hope and her sibling were placed into foster care.

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Background

Over the years, concerns relating to neglect and emotional and domestic abuse resulted in long-term multi-agency support. Hope's mother experienced domestic abuse, initially from her children's fathers, and later, child to parent abuse from Hope's older half-sibling. This created fear and instability at home.

Hope's mother is profoundly deaf and suffers from chronic pain.

The family received support from health services, children's services, the police, housing and schools.

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Patterns and practice

- Whilst Hope's dual heritage was acknowledged by practitioners in their assessments, the impact of her cultural identity on her lived experiences and behaviours was not explored in any detail.
- The use of racial slurs towards hospital staff by the children did not prompt any deeper understanding of possible identity struggles or learned behaviours within the family environment.
- The children's fathers (or any other male caregivers) were largely absent from the chronologies provided for Hope. Whilst not absent from the children's lives, their roles and impact on the family were not adequately understood.



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Acknowledging good

Following the review, local health services have identified areas to include the involvement of fathers and male caregivers during key touchpoints via:

- Revised GP registration processes which consider the whole family.
- Greater health visitor engagement with fathers.



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Key learning

- Developing practitioners' cultural competence can build trusting relationships with families, regardless of their ethnic or cultural background.
- Consideration of race, ethnicity and culture can help to build a greater understanding of the child's lived experience.
- Tools, including genograms, family mapping and direct engagement, support understanding of the role all caregivers play in a child's life.



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Reflective questions

- What tools do you have available to help you explore race, ethnicity and cultural identity? How do these support you to understand a child's lived experiences and behaviours?
- How confident are you at recognising barriers such as bias, cultural misunderstandings and stereotyping when working with dual-heritage children and families?
- How do you ensure you consider the roles of fathers or male caregivers within a child's life? How do you seek support when engagement is limited?



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Useful resources

Find more information about safeguarding children from Black, Asian and Mixed Heritage backgrounds on the Panel's new learning hub:

www.childsafeguarding.independent-panel.uk

You can access videos, webinars, podcasts and other content, including the report: "[It's Silent: Race, racism and safeguarding children](#)".

Read the full Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review: "[Hope, Havering Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)".