

Unseen or hidden men

Background

NSPCC analysis of SCRs in England and Wales [Learning from Case Reviews](#) identified 2 types of hidden men, those:

1. who posed a risk, which resulted in death or significant harm;
2. who could've protected and nurtured but were overlooked

Why does it matter?

Children were harmed or died due to:

- abuse and neglect by men with caring responsibilities (fathers, stepfathers, or mother's partners)
- abuse by mothers' partners who did not live in the household
- the impact of unmanaged mental health or substance abuse problems on men's behaviour.

Discussion

- Do you recognise these issues?
- What are the barriers to involving men?
- Do we ask children/listen to children about new men in their lives?
- What do we do well?
- What could we do better?
- How can we do things differently?

Key issues:

- a lack of professional engagement and curiosity
- an over-focus on the quality of the care children receive from their mothers
- inadequate information sharing between services.

Information sharing

- Adult services often rely on men self-reporting their contact with children;
- Adult Services failed to consider CP issues – lack of info sharing between Adult & Children's Services;
 - Details about the men in a child's life were not carefully recorded – men who posed a risk and those who could be protective were not identified.

Over-focus on mothers

- Childcare seen as women's work;
- Info re caring given to mothers;
- Mothers expected to identify CP issues. Fathers' concerns overlooked;
- Mothers expected to share info about men in their lives
- Fathers not included in parenting support. Mothers' problems taking precedence
- Men's (fathers, grandfathers, uncles etc.) capacity to provide safe care overlooked.

Lack of Professional curiosity and Engagement

- Professionals:
- Avoided asking questions – didn't want to be invasive
 - Lacked curiosity about new men in a child's life
 - Were intimidated by threatening or aggressive men.
- Men avoided contact. They:
- thought they would be ignored
 - were suspicious of services