

## Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson

Arthur Labinjo-Hughes tragically died in June 2021 aged 6 years old after suffering a campaign of violence, cruelty and abuse at the hands of his father and partner. The father was convicted of manslaughter and his partner of murder, both have been sent to prison. The government has announced that the case will be reviewed as a national child safeguarding practice review, which will be published sometime in 2022: [Government action following murder of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes](#). There is no doubt that Arthur was an invisible child whose voice often went unheard. The COVID lockdowns removed him from the protective sight of services and as a consequence his father and partner were able to abuse him and to ultimately cause his death. In addition to the National Review, Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission and the police and probation inspectorates are conducting an urgent [joint targeted area inspection \(JTAI\) into agencies in Solihull](#) (21.02.22).



Star Hobson died in September 2020 aged 16 months old from catastrophic injuries caused by her mother's female partner. Star's mother was found guilty of causing or allowing her death. Five referrals had been made to social services in the previous eight months by concerned family and friends. The National Review not only needs to examine how authorities responded to the five referrals before Star's death but needs to look in great depth the mass of evidence available to make sure the Review's recommendations are as robust as they can be so that learning for all agencies is captured which means the Review will be delayed. This will also mean that the views of Star's family will be "fully reflected in the final report".

There are clear parallels between the murder of Arthur and Star and it is worth noting the similarities in the events leading to the two killings. Both children were killed by their parents' new partner. There was almost certainly jealousy at play in the motivation of the violence. Extended family who tried to help them and being of known concern to the authorities. Additionally, both were murdered during the COVID-19 pandemic which arguably made it easier for their worsening condition to be hidden from others.

The Government's national review into the circumstances behind Arthur's murder will report by May 2022 and recommend improvements to local and national child safeguarding practice. Annie Hudson, chair of the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, will lead the national inquiry, here are the [terms of reference](#) which will also look at the death of Star Hobson.

The inquiry will seek to:

- Establish what happened to Arthur during his life and, in building that picture, explore agency involvement with all those charged with caring for him. We will try to understand what life was really like for Arthur by hearing from all those involved, especially his family.
- Evaluate how agencies acted to safeguard Arthur and what factors enabled or limited their ability to protect him from the profound and ultimately fatal abuse and neglect that he suffered.
- Establish what happened to Star during her life and, in building that picture, explore agency involvement with all those charged with caring for her. We will try to understand what life was really like for Star by hearing from all those involved, especially her family.
- Evaluate how agencies acted to safeguard Star and what factors enabled or limited their ability to protect her from the profound and ultimately fatal abuse and neglect that she suffered.

The following messages to all those who work with children, young people and their families:

- Cases like Arthur's and Star's are thankfully rare, but remind us to always be vigilant in the work that the partnership do with families and to report any concerns they have and to ensure that all of staff know how to report concerns
- All frontline practitioners to have opportunities to discuss and reflect on cases. This is invaluable and all partners need to ensure practitioners have access to this support
- At the core of all frontline work is the need to understand the daily lived experience of children and young people, to hear their voice and to act on what they tell us. Please see the suite of tools to help you establish a '[Day in my life](#)'.
- Be [professionally curious](#) – asking the awkward questions when you have concerns is the right thing to do and know how to [escalate](#) concerns
- Check that all staff know where to go to for advice and support

### To report concerns about a child or a young person

In [Bedford Borough](#) use the new online referral portal at this [link](#). If you are unable to use the portal contact the Integrated Front Door (IFD) on: 01234 718700 (office hours) or 0300 300 8123 (out of hours)

In [Central Bedfordshire](#) use the online form [Click here](#). If you are unable to use the online form or need to talk to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) contact them on 0300 3008585 (office hours) or 0300 300 8123 (out of hours).

In Luton [click here](#) to submit an online referral to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), or contact them on 01582 547653 or 0300 300 8123 (out of hours) or email: [mash@luton.gov.uk](mailto:mash@luton.gov.uk)

The [Pan Bedfordshire Inter Agency Child Protection Procedures](#) are available to assist practitioners in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children/young people.