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03/01/06 - News section

Pair charged over death of boy, 2

A mother and stepfather have appeared in court charged in connection with the death of a two-year-old boy.

Keiron Kenny died in hospital after being found injured at his home in the Crawley area of Luton, Bedfordshire.

His mother, 22-year-old Hayley Kenny, is thought to be the first person charged with the new crime of "familial homicide".

Keiron's stepfather, Craig Pearce, 21, is charged with murder.

Kenny was granted bail when she appeared at Luton Crown Court on Tuesday.

Pearce was remanded back into custody until March 27, when both defendants will enter pleas to the charges.

Keiron was pronounced dead after arriving at Luton and Dunstable Hospital.

The toddler died from internal injuries and police were alerted by medical staff at the hospital.

Hayley Kenny's charge accuses her of "causing or allowing the death of a child or vulnerable adult" between October 24 and December 14.

The new offence of familial homicide, introduced in the Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004, will close a legal loophole that used to allow those jointly accused of the murder of a child or vulnerable adult to escape justice by remaining silent or blaming each other.

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