



WOLVERHAMPTON SAFEGUARDING TOGETHER

Safeguarding Adults Review published

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A Safeguarding Adults Review has today been published by Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together.

The review was commissioned to examine in detail the experiences of a young woman, referred to as Helen, who sadly passed away at the age of 18 as a result of liver failure, hepatic necrosis and paracetamol toxicity.

Helen and her father had left the family home due to concerns relating to domestic abuse between Helen's father and mother, which resulted in them being homeless and staying with family and friends. Helen's father returned to the family home, however, Helen did not, and at the time of her death she was residing in temporary accommodation. Concerns were raised around Helen's general vulnerability due to her poor mental health and ability to live independently.

The review looked into agencies' involvement with Helen in the 14-month period leading up to her death, during which her situation became increasingly complex, marked by a transition from child to adult mental health services, escalating mental health crises, and significant housing instability.

It concludes that Helen's life journey reflects both her resilience and the dedication of professionals who supported her through complex challenges, including mental health needs, emerging physical health conditions, housing instability, and family conflict.

There were notable examples of good practice, but also opportunities to strengthen transition planning, embed trauma-informed approaches, and enhance holistic care coordination to ensure consistent, joined-up support.

The review also identifies a number of learning points for the agencies involved, including around direct practice, interagency collaboration and organisational and systemic factors, and specific recommendations for change and improvement.

Alison Hinds, Chair of Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together Executive Board, said: "This is a tragic case and, as a partnership, we would like to extend our condolences to Helen's family and friends on their loss.

“The purpose of commissioning the Safeguarding Adult Review is to ensure that we, as a safeguarding partnership, can take action to address any shortfalls in practice which are identified.

“Helen’s experience highlights why we need truly joined-up, person-centred and trauma-informed systems that understand the particular vulnerabilities young adults face as they move through different stages of their lives.

“Although this review shows many examples of committed and caring professionals, it also makes clear that more can be done to turn policy into day-to-day practice, strengthen partnership governance, and build legal confidence across all services.

“By tackling these wider system issues – through clearer oversight, better integration and ongoing investment – we can ensure that young people like Helen receive care that is well-coordinated and genuinely responsive to their needs.

“We welcome the learning points and recommendations that have been made and have instigated plans to ensure that we are able to act upon them.”

The Safeguarding Adults Review has been published on the Wolverhampton Safeguarding Adults Board website. For more information, please visit www.wolverhamptionsafeguarding.org.uk.

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Note to editors:

1/ A Safeguarding Adult Review is a multi-agency review process which seeks to establish the circumstances around an individual's death and determine what relevant agencies and individuals involved could have done differently that could have prevented harm or a death from taking place. The purpose of a SAR is not to apportion blame; it is to promote effective learning and improvement to prevent future deaths or serious harm occurring again.

2/ Section 44 of the Care Act 2014 requires a SAR to be carried out “where an adult with care and support needs (whether or not those needs are met by the local authority) in the Safeguarding Adult Board’s area has died as a result of abuse or neglect, whether known or suspected, and there is concern that partner agencies could have worked together more effectively to protect the adult”.

3/ Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together Board provides strategic leadership for safeguarding work to ensure there is a consistently high standard of professional response to situations where there is actual or suspected harm. For more information, please visit www.wolverhamptionsafeguarding.org.uk.