Safeguarding Adult Review Mark

Mark was 48 years old and lived in a housing association property. He was described as a friendly person. Mark became friends with a group of people within the same block who were involved in anti-social behaviour and used alcohol and drugs. He suffered from ill physical heath due to alcohol use and had a history of mental health issues. Mark was involved in criminal behaviour and showed early signs of self-neglect and was frequently “cuckooed” when a friend took over his flat and changed the lock so Mark was not able to enter. Mark was murdered and one of people he had become friends with was convicted of his murder in June 2019.

Finding 1 - Working with people who have chaotic lifestyles, including anti-social behaviour (ASB), who do not meet the criteria for adult social care safeguarding creates challenges for the practitioners working with them and trying to provide support. Practice, and outcomes for vulnerable adults, is being affected by organisations not working within a multi-agency approach.

Board response

In line with the Care Act requirements around Wellbeing, a new operating model for wellbeing and independent is being developed in Waltham Forest. To support this model a comprehensive multi-agency document is being developed that includes this new model alongside guidance for all partners in relation to safeguarding adults, providing advice and guidance across the spectrum of need from low level to complex/safeguarding.

Within this there will be an emphasis of working within a Think Family approach and providing a multi-agency response for adults, including use of lead professional/single point of contact and team around the adult meetings.

This guidance document will be accompanied by a range of awareness raising activities at the beginning of 2018/19.

The impact of the document will be monitored through audit and quality assurance measures and this will inform any further work that is required to ensure the principles of this approach are embed across the partnership.

Finding 2 - Difficulties in needing to define a person’s support needs within the context of services threshold/criteria creates barriers for practitioners in understanding when and to who they can refer, resulting in adults not receiving the support and help they require.

Board response

The board is already undertaking work in relation to cuckooing (where a vulnerable adult’s home is taken over by a criminal gang for the purpose of criminal activity such as drug
We are reviewing how the present forum for anti-social behaviour issues can be adapted to be inclusive of issues such as cuckooing and other issues that require a multi-agency approach. The forum will have a threshold and criteria, but is open to supporting people that may not fit the criteria and would benefit from a multi-agency approach. The current forum already includes a safeguarding approach and in the refresh forum this will be further emphasised.

The referral and care pathways to and from the forum are being mapped and will include the daily risk management meeting in the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to provide opportunities for sharing information. The forum will also steer professionals from the across the partnership in relation to Think Family and multi-agency working as defined in the new guidance document as discussed in Finding 1.

In addition stronger links will be developed between this forum, the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference, MARAC will be developed to enable identification of people in the same families/communities.

**Finding 3 Recognising and naming self-neglect in the context of adults with capacity who are misusing alcohol and drugs is a challenge for the multi-agency partnership. This can mean it is not identified when self-neglect becomes a safeguarding issue.**

**Board response**

The board created a self-neglect priority in April 2018 and work is underway to improve the identification of and response to self-neglect. This work includes refreshing the SAB’s self-neglect policy and guidance and undertaking awareness rising across the partnership.

The refresh policy will include particular guidance around mental capacity, including learning from practice in mental health services around “fluctuating capacity” and provide clear guidance for practitioners so that questions around capacity do not become a barrier to providing support or services.

The policy already has the principle of Don’t Walk Away and this will now also include Walk Alongside which will link in with the multi-agency approach for adults described in the document in Finding One and promoted by the forum described in Finding Two.

There are significant and well developed improvements being made to fully integrated adult safeguarding into the MASH. This will include improved practice in relation to referrals, in particular in relation to information sharing, use of historical context and risk assessment.

The police electronic system for recording Merlins is changing so that all the Merlins that have been generated for one person will be stored/stacked against that individual's name. When completing a Merlin, officers will be able to see and read the previous Merlin which
should improve their understanding of the issue, enable them to use historical context and influence their risk assessment.