



The death of “Ms A”

A Safeguarding Adult Review for Havering Safeguarding Adults Board

June 2017

Executive Summary

Introduction

1. This Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) was carried out at the request of Havering’s Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) by Professor Michael Preston-Shoot of the University of Bedfordshire. The SAR concerns a young woman - referred to as Ms A throughout the report - with very complex needs who took her own life. She had been a looked-after child and was known to children’s social care services, the police, Community Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference, NHS Trusts providing mental and physical health treatment and to the adult social care safeguarding team.
2. The aim of the review is to learn and understand how things can be delivered differently in the future to improve outcomes for vulnerable adults. The focus of the review is on transition processes from children’s services to adult services when there are complex needs and vulnerabilities that will impact on stability and security in adulthood; eligibility criteria for services; and how to co-ordinate a service for vulnerable adults.
3. Many agencies participated in the review and they did so in a spirit of openness and honesty. During the review, two learning events were held that included practitioners from the services that engaged with Ms A in order to discuss, and capture, all the lessons.

Recommendations

4. The review itself makes 28 recommendations and there were a further 12 recommendations made directly by individual practitioners and managers based on their experience of working with Ms A. The recommendations identify areas for review so that outcomes can be improved but are not prescriptive about how these outcomes should be achieved.

The recommendations can be grouped into five areas:

(a) Management of complex cases involving vulnerable young adults

These include recommendations aimed at avoiding placement disruptions; improving the management and oversight of complex cases; and smoothing the transition between children's and adults social care and mental health services.

(b) Training provision, supervision and staff support for complex cases

These include recommendations to improve training provision in areas such as mental health, mental capacity, leaving care and transition and information-sharing including legal requirements; strengthening the supervision and support for frontline staff involved in complex cases; and developing staff skills and confidence to express concerned curiosity and to inquire into young people's lived experiences.

(c) Record keeping and information sharing

These include recommendations aimed at improving information-sharing in complex cases; the transfer of medical records and using knowledge of case history to inform risk assessment and to work with young people to develop self-protection strategies.

(d) Greater availability of specialist support

These include recommendations aimed at ensuring that suitable legal and mental health expertise is available to those involved with complex and/or high risk cases.

(e) Review of eligibility criteria and thresholds

These include recommendations for a review of the thresholds for a safeguarding enquiry and a care and support assessment and a review of eligibility for mental health services.

Implementing the recommendations

5. Implementation of the recommendations will be overseen by Havering's SAB and its working groups.
6. Following a successful £2.4m bid into the children's social care innovation programme run by the Department for Education, Havering Council will be making additional investment in services for young people to bridge the gap between Children's Services and Adult Social Care and help ensure that young people have the best chances in education and employment as they move away from the care system. The services will be developed in partnership with young people to ensure they respond to their individual needs. There will be a tailored care plan for each young person rather than a 'one size fits all' philosophy. This may involve for example bringing together teams of social workers, NHS staff, teachers and other professionals, to tackle problems such as domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental health problems.
7. In addition, extra resource will also be made available for teams to work intensively with families where there is a risk of family breakdown, and ensure that, where possible, families are supported to remain together. In cases where this is not possible, the aim is for young people to be placed with local foster carers, who will receive an enhanced package of support and training. All staff involved in the programme, including foster carers, will undertake training in new skills. The aim is to create a model that will enable foster carers and social workers to work together more effectively and support young people to return home.
8. The Council believes that this new approach to young people at risk will reduce the likelihood of tragic cases such as Ms A reoccurring in the future.