



Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board: PRESS RELEASE

Review recommends improvements following death of Somerset resident

A series of recommendations have been made in a report commissioned by the Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB) following the death of a Somerset resident in 2018.

These recommendations are shared today (14/12/2021) in a report that documents the events leading up to Matthew's death (pseudonym), in hospital, in January 2018. The day before his admission, Matthew had declined a planned admission to a community hospital and was found at home drifting in and out of consciousness by staff employed by a care agency.

Matthew had a history of multiple and complex health problems, including substance misuse, type two diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and skin infections.

Prior to his death, organisations were attempting to support him in relation to his history of neglecting his own health and well-being. Matthew's case highlights the difficulties organisations face in supporting people with complex health and social care needs, who want to maintain their independence and decision making.

The report makes seven recommendations for the Board to ensure that learning from this case is embedded in working practices. In summary these recommendations include:

- That Somerset County Council and NHS Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group undertake an exercise to evaluate current capacity within registered care homes in Somerset to support adults with bariatric needs, and should any gaps be identified, develop a plan to address them.
- That all SSAB member organisations actively promote guidance on "[What to do if it's not Safeguarding?](#)" within their organisations and remind staff of the importance of clear minutes being taken of any capacity assessments undertaken, and multi-disciplinary meetings that take place (which include clear actions allocated to named professionals/organisations, shared with all involved in the meeting).

- That SSAB member organisations provide written briefings to their staff, that where a complex transfer is being considered which involves multiple organisations, a lead professional is identified to coordinate the process, make sure decisions are made in a timely way, and actions are both allocated to named individuals and followed up on to ensure they have been carried out as agreed. In most cases, this will be an employee of the organisation with the lead responsibility for commissioning the adult's care and support. They should also act as the point of contact if the plan cannot be carried out as agreed.

The learning from the review will be shared with all partners of the Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board, and also within national networks.

Keith Perkin, Independent Chair of the SSAB said:

"I want to take this opportunity to offer Matthew's family my sincere condolences for their loss. Safeguarding Adult Reviews are fundamental to how agencies learn to improve their safeguarding practices for those who need their support. I am pleased that the agencies involved in this review were open to that learning. It is now incumbent on the Somerset Safeguarding Adult Board to ensure the recommendations from this review become common practice, so that those people in similar circumstances to Matthew can receive the help they need and deserve."

The Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board is made up of all organisations which have a role in preventing the neglect and abuse of adults, including: Somerset County Council, NHS Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group, Avon & Somerset Constabulary, Mendip District Council, Sedgemoor District Council, Somerset West and Taunton District Council, South Somerset District Council, Somerset NHS Foundation Trust, Yeovil Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, National Probation Service, Registered Care Provider Association and Healthwatch Somerset.

For more information about the SSAB and a copy of the report visit:

www.ssab.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk

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For more information contact Somerset County Council's Communications Team on 01823 355020 or pressoffice@somerset.gov.uk

Notes to editors