Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board:

PRESS RELEASE

Review calls for stronger, coordinated support for adults experiencing homelessness and multiple disadvantage

The recommendations are contained in a report published today (11 November 2026)by the Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB), setting out the findings of a Safeguarding Adult Review into the death of a 68-year-old man known in the report by the pseudonym Raymond.

The review was commissioned after Raymond died in December 2024 while living in interim accommodation. It examined how agencies responded to his overlapping experiences of homelessness, trauma and bereavement, drug and alcohol dependency, cognitive impairment, frailty, financial exploitation and unmet care and support needs.

Raymond was remembered as a warm and caring “gentle giant”, who was well known and liked by professionals and acted as an informal father figure within the local street community. He repeatedly sought help and wanted support, although memory difficulties, declining health and intoxication sometimes made engagement challenging.

The review recognises committed, compassionate and persistent frontline practice. It also identifies five areas requiring action:

- significant gaps in support for people experiencing financial abuse and exploitation alongside homelessness;
- bureaucratic delays, unclear escalation routes and unresolved professional differences that left Raymond at risk;
- insufficient attention in trauma-informed practice to the relationship between homelessness, grief and bereavement;
- gaps in suitable accommodation for adults whose care and support needs include drug and alcohol dependency; and
- the effect of stigma and uncertainty about cognitive functioning and mental capacity on safeguarding decisions.

Its recommendations include:

- refreshing multi-agency guidance and learning on financial abuse and exploitation;
- strengthening oversight of partner actions, professional-difference procedures and safeguarding within accommodation funding decisions;
- developing work on bereavement support and intersectionality in trauma-informed care;
- mapping specialist and supported accommodation, establishing a senior panel for complex cases where action has stalled, and developing a business case for homecare support in temporary and supported accommodation; and
- improving approaches to mental capacity assessments and promoting learning on unconscious bias, stigma and social attitudes.

Professor Michael Preston-Shoot, Independent Chair of the SSAB, said:

“Safeguarding Adult Reviews are not about apportioning blame. They help us understand what happened, identify learning and strengthen how organisations work together to protect adults at risk.

“Raymond was a valued member of his community whose warmth, humour and resilience were recognised by those who knew him. This review also shows how fragmented responses, delay and professional disagreement can leave an adult facing multiple disadvantage without the coordinated help they need.

“The Board will oversee a clear action plan so that the learning from Raymond’s life informs stronger safeguarding practice across Somerset. This includes listening to the person, acting promptly when risks escalate, valuing the expertise of all partners and providing trauma-informed, legally literate and coordinated support. We extend our condolences to Raymond’s family and loved ones, and thank everyone who contributed openly to the review.”

The Safeguarding Somerset Adults Board is made up of all the organisations which have a role in preventing the neglect and abuse of adults, including: Somerset Council, Somerset NHS Integrated Care Board, Avon & Somerset Constabulary, Probation Service, Somerset NHS Foundation Trust, South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust, 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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