



Safeguarding Adult Review Adult AX

Adult AX was a White British, bisexual, female who sadly died in 2022, aged 20 years old following a drugs overdose. She was described as *“a lovely girl with a lovely personality”*.

Adult AX’s childhood was marred by consistent episodes of domestic abuse incidents between her parents of which she was a witness. Adult AX and her siblings experienced a transient lifestyle whilst seeking places of safety, but a constant protective characteristic in Adult AX’s short life appeared to be her sister.

Aged 13 years Adult AX self-harmed by cutting herself whilst heavily intoxicated and was referred to Mental Health services where she expressed suicidal ideation. She was placed into the care of an aunt in April 2010 and subsequently became a Cared for Child but continued to gravitate back to her parents.

From her teenage years Adult AX experienced a spiral of decline in both her physical, mental health and wellbeing and became involved in anti-social behaviour, alcohol and substance misuse, to the detriment of her health.

Since 2020, there were numerous concerns raised by the police about her mental health and substance misuse and she was found unconscious in the street on numerous occasions having taken accidental overdoses. Police also submitted an adult concern in relation to sexual exploitation, but Adult AX denied this was happening. Adult AX’s mother also reported she was raped but Adult AX would not provide police with any information regarding this allegation.

Adult AX has also experienced domestic abuse within her own relationships. Adult AX was working with Leaving Care Services at the time of her death.

WHAT IS A SAFEGUARDING ADULTS REVIEW?

Care Act 2014: Statutory duty of the Safeguarding Adults Board to conduct a Safeguarding Adults Review

“Where an adult with care and support needs has died and the Board knows or suspects that the death resulted from abuse or neglect, AND There is reasonable cause for concern about how the Board, its members or others worked together to safeguard the adult”.

OUTCOME

To identify lessons to be learnt from the case and apply those lessons to future cases (not to allocate blame or responsibility) AND to improve how agencies work, singly and together, to safeguard adults.

If you would like a copy of the full report please contact STSCAP@southtyneside.gov.uk

Themes of the Case

- Transitional Safeguarding
- Mental Health Issues and Substance Misuse – Dual Diagnosis
- Consideration of Self- Neglect in Young Adults
- Impact of ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences), Trauma and Parental Domestic Abuse on children and young people.





Key Learning

Self- Neglect cases involving self-harm are often a result of deep-seated prior trauma / ACEs and present in a variety of ways. This requires lengthy, flexible, and creative involvement and can be contrary to eligibility criteria for services and other organisational pressures. There should be clear guidance and pathways to exploring the link between self-harm and its interaction with self-neglect as well as consideration of the impact of substance and alcohol misuse on self-neglect and subsequent links to Mental Capacity.

Practitioners should use multi-agency risk management meetings to determine levels of risk and expected outcomes, considering all aspects of Making Safeguarding Personal.

The process should be structured to improve co-ordination, continuity, and communication between services. It should be agreed which practitioner within each agency would have the lead role to oversee the safeguarding process for their organisation.

A Transitional Safeguarding Process should be developed which reflects the increase in engagement with outcomes for care experienced young adults. It should also link to the use of a framework to identify and address exploitation concerns.

Multi-Disciplinary Team meetings should consider how discretionary enquiries under the Wellbeing Duty of the Care Act (S1) support the statement '*promoting wellbeing involves actively seeking improvements in the aspects of wellbeing*' It is not enough just to have regard to it.

Practitioners should be competent and equipped to recognise where past trauma has played a significant part in the persons engagement, using a Trauma Informed approach to practice with Professional Curiosity and Making Safeguarding Personal at the centre of the work.

Accommodation and Housing partners can play a key role in identifying and raising concerns around adult safeguarding. Consideration should always be given to their involvement in Multi-Disciplinary Team Meetings.

Multi-agency partners should be aware of and consider what frameworks and mechanisms can be used to support adults who do not meet adult safeguarding thresholds but where a significant risk of harm remains.

Where there is a significant/critical risk of harm, safeguarding adults' procedures should be used to share information and to manage risks. If concerns persist and/or risks increase, there may be a need to seek additional advice and support. This might be from legal services, senior managers and/or safeguarding/MCA specialists.

Case recording should provide a full and comprehensive picture of all the actions taken in managing the case – including appropriate [Multi-Agency Information Sharing Agreement](#), Management Oversight and the use [Escalation and Challenge Protocol](#)

Questions for Consideration

- When an adult is unable to recognise, they are a victim of exploitation or abuse due to the depth of trauma they have experienced, what creative ways are used to encourage and build effective and trusting relationships?
- How is your service referral criteria a barrier to building meaningful relationships and engagement?
- How can partners identify learning where it is not clear whether a death was accidental or the outcome of suicidal ideation, and the case does not meet Safeguarding Adult Review criteria (given there is more than a 50% increase in Safeguarding Adults Reviews that feature suicide and satisfy the SAR criteria)?
- What impact is the Covid 19 pandemic legacy having on safeguarding in your organisation?

