Learning from a Safeguarding Adults Review

safeguarding adults at risk
a cumbria partnership

This short briefing summarises the key themes and lessons to be learned following a Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) undertaken by Cumbria Safeguarding Adults Board (CSAB). The SAR commissioned by CSAB relates to a gentleman referred to as Barry, a white British male aged 70 years old at the time of his death.

A SAR takes place where there is reasonable concern about how the Safeguarding Adults Board or members of it worked together to safeguard the adult, the adult has died, and the SAB knows or suspects the death resulted from abuse or neglect.

Barry's story

Barry died on 23rd May 2019 by taking an overdose of medication in his car parked in his GP surgery car park. Barry left a suicide note with boxes containing prescribed medication and empty blister packs found next to him.

Barry was a lonely man with few friends and very limited family contact. Barry lived alone and was not a member of many community groups. He is known to have moved about frequently and moved to Cumbria in the late spring of 2018. Barry suffered from depression and loneliness and accessed numerous services for support during his time in Cumbria. Barry stated to professionals that the death of his mother in 2008 had a negative impact on his mental health.

The review highlighted several key themes as areas for learning and action:

Theme: Effectiveness of services assessing and responding to Barry's needs
Learning
• Whilst there was a significant number of both single and multi-agency contacts with Barry these appear to have only addressed his short term or physical health needs.
• Thresholds for access to services resulted in Barry not getting the support he required. There was an overreliance on the assumption that Barry was lonely with social issues, services should have carried out robust assessments of his mental health with appropriate signposting for support.
What will we do?
CSAB will seek assurance from partners about how agencies work together to protect adults with multiple needs, taking into consideration cases where adults do not meet thresholds for some services.
We will seek assurances that where adults with care and support needs do not meet thresholds for mental health service provision, appropriate signposting is available for alternatives which meet their needs.
CSAB will seek assurance on how agencies work together to provide effective care co-ordination ensuring there is effective oversight of decision making, care provision and information sharing for appropriate and timely interventions.

Theme: Co-ordination of services working together with Barry

Learning
- There was a lack of care co-ordination between agencies working with Barry with frequent contacts and referrals between agencies involved in his care. This included a lack of understanding about which organisation should take the lead role.
- The GP seen Barry on an almost daily basis, a multi-agency approach should have been taken to ensure he received appropriate provision to meet his needs.

What will we do?

We will seek assurance to ensure that agencies and professionals are supported when dealing with complex cases or frequent attenders and understand when and how to activate multi-agency involvement or response for effective care coordination.

Theme: Referral systems and processes

Learning
- There appeared to be an over reliance on referral processes as a solution which presented issues when thresholds for access were not met, often resulting in a revolving door situation.
- Repeat referrals and frequent contacts did not trigger a multi-disciplinary response with access to appropriate and timely services.
- Requests for Care Act Assessments were not always made through the appropriate channel and therefore not responded to.

What will we do?

CSAB will seek assurances from our partner agencies that there are robust systems in place to identify individuals like Barry who frequently access services, and that they are responded to effectively.

We will seek assurances that the system for requesting Care Act assessments is robust, partner agencies know how to make a request and all requests are responded to appropriately.

Theme: Loneliness

Learning

Barry was a lonely man who had no contact with family and little contact with friends. Being lonely has a significant impact on wellbeing and quality of life (Age UK, 2018). Age UK research suggests that people are more likely to be lonely if they have no-one to open up to, are widowed, in poor health, feel as though they do not belong in their neighbourhood, unable to do what they want and live alone. Barry experienced most of these factors and his loneliness had a negative impact on his mental health.

What will we do?

CSAB will consider the impact of loneliness; explore how agencies can work to improve outcomes for adults with care and support needs and raise awareness of the impact of loneliness on wider health issues.

Theme: Good Practice

The review identified a number of areas of good practice including;

- Barry was always listened to by all professionals
- Barry's GP provided a high level of service with swift escalation for all his physical health needs.
- There was excellent record keeping which supported the SAR to understand what the key learning is.
- Despite his rural location practitioners and professional met with Barry frequently on a face to face basis and tried their upmost to support Barry.
- Barry was very well supported by a Health & Wellbeing Coach who regularly worked with him to identify his goals.
- Concerns about Barry's mental health were responded to quickly by the Access Liaison & Integration Service

Learning has been shared with all agencies involved and a robust Action Plan developed to address key themes and learning which will be monitored on a regular basis.

CSAB will develop further mechanisms to disseminate learning for practitioners to raise the profile of lessons learned from this case and other SARs in the system in due course.

For more information visit our **website** where you will find a full copy of the report.