

## 'Mairead' Safeguarding Adults Review: Practice Briefing

A Safeguarding Adults Review was completed following Mairead's death to identify any learning for the safeguarding network in Hillingdon.

Mairead was a 70-year-old white female open to secondary mental health services with a diagnosis of schizophrenia. Mairead saw a psychiatrist periodically and attended a psychiatric medication clinic regularly. She was in supported accommodation with a low level of floating support attached.

In June 2021 she was taken to hospital by ambulance very mentally unwell and physically frail. She sadly died in hospital.



Throughout May and June 2021 professionals who saw her documented recurrent concerns about deteriorating mental state and difficulties engaging her in face-to-face contact. She was described on multiple occasions as appearing "unwell". However, opportunities to intervene in response to these concerns were missed until she was in crisis.

### Key Lessons for Practice

#### Good Assessment is Holistic, Proportionate and Supported by Partnership Working

Multiple professionals had responsibilities for assessing and reviewing Mairead's care, support and mental health needs. However, they were largely working in isolation from each other. Family members and paid support providers were not consulted in assessments of mental health needs nor social care needs. This impaired the quality of all agencies' assessments and interventions.

#### What can you learn from this?

- Find out who else is involved in supporting someone and speak to them.
- All professionals working with adults with care and support needs have an obligation to co-operate with each other, which includes asking for and sharing information.
- Assessments need to be holistic - consider mental health, physical health, the implications of any financial difficulties, overall wellbeing, the views and concerns of family members, and anyone providing support or closely involved. Consider mental capacity as well.

#### Responding to Disengagement from Services

Mairead had very little face to face engagement with any professionals throughout 2020 and 2021. There were frequent non-attendances and cancellations of appointments, and refusal to allow access to her home, including for necessary repairs. The reasons for her disengagement and the potential risks associated with it were not explored.

#### What can you learn from this?

- Make sure you know your organisation's policy about how to respond to someone disengaging from your service or declining to engage.
- If someone is disengaging from care or support commissioned by the local authority, this should prompt a review by the local authority under s.27 Care Act 2014.
- Assess risks by speaking to other people involved in the person's care and support - this should include informal carers, family members, and any other professionals involved. If you are not sure who is involved, find out and contact them.
- Sometimes disengagement from care or support can indicate self-neglect or an increase in other risks. It is important to understand the reasons for the disengagement.
- Be curious, ask questions, think about the implications of information you and other organisations have on record.

## Know the Law: Care Act 2014 Duties of Assessment and Review

Mairead lived in a low-support group home for many years. There were floating support workers attached to the property, providing support a couple of times a week, and she received informal support from her brother and sister over the years. However, the only documented assessment or review of her needs by the local authority was in June 2020. This assessment did not involve Mairead's informal carers nor paid support workers. Discharging legal duties of assessment and review is important for identifying and managing risks.

### Make sure you know what the Care Act 2014 says:

#### Section 7:

- There is a duty on all professionals to work together to support adults who might have care and support needs.
- If a local authority requests co-operation of a health professional, or other relevant professional, to help in the assessment or support of an individual, they must cooperate, unless it is incompatible with their own duties.
- And vice versa.

#### Section 9:

- The local authority has a legal duty to assess needs of people who appear to have care and support needs - this includes people who might need supported accommodation.
- People who are receiving support, including floating support, have the appearance of support needs and therefore are owed a duty of assessment.
- Anyone providing care to an adult, e.g. a family member helping with financial management or food shopping, or someone paid to provide care or support, ***must*** be consulted in an assessment of need or reviews of a care and/or support package.

#### Section 27:

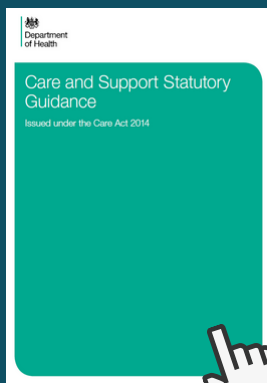
- If the local authority has arranged support, it ***must*** review that support - even where an adult says they do not want their support reviewed.
- If someone makes a reasonable request on behalf of an adult for a review of their care or support, a review ***must*** be undertaken.
- If there is reason to believe a person's needs may have changed e.g. concern from family or provider, or disengagement from support, the local authority should reassess needs.

#### Section 11

- If there is reason to believe the adult might be at risk of abuse or neglect, including self-neglect, the local authority ***must*** assess their needs, alongside any safeguarding enquiries, ***even if the adult refuses the assessment.***

## Care and Support Statutory Guidance

Statutory guidance tells us how we must apply the Care Act 2014. It is guidance that all professionals must pay attention to in working with adults with care and support needs. Make sure you know what it says about assessments.



#### **Paragraph 6.14:**

*Where an adult has a need... the local authority... must... consider whether their need(s) have... consequences on their... personal health. ... The local authority must also consider whether the individual's needs impact upon their wellbeing beyond the ways identified by the individual.*

#### **Paragraph 6.77:**

*Where more than one agency is assessing a person, they should all work closely together to prevent that person having to undergo a number of assessments at different times.*

#### **Paragraph 6.78:**

*Where a person has both health and care and support needs, local authorities and the NHS should work together effectively to deliver a high quality, coordinated assessment.*