

Lily Safeguarding Adult Review - 6 Step Briefing

The Background

Lily was a young adult of 18 who was described by her birth parents as 'vibrant, strong willed, intelligent and a pleasure to have as a daughter'. Lily was a Care Leaver who had been receiving various support from mental health services, but records show there was a marked increase in Lily's self-harming around her 18th birthday. In June, Lily was admitted to hospital following a third suicide attempt in two weeks, and sadly died in hospital following an overdose of the beta-blocker medication Propranolol.

The Incident

Lily was admitted to hospital twice in June 2021 for self-harming incidents. Despite being declared medically fit for discharge, Lily remained on the ward whilst Hampshire and Southampton local authorities debated who should take responsibility for housing Lily, following concerns from her foster carers about her returning home with such fluctuating mental health. Lily found staying and studying on the ward distressing and it negatively affected her mental health.

Following a visit from Lily's parents, in which she expressed suicidal thoughts and gave them a letter which outlined her intentions to end her own life, Lily asked ward staff for a package which had been kept in the ward locker. Contrary to hospital policy, ward staff gave Lily the package - three boxes of Propranolol ordered from an online pharmacy. Lily left the hospital and overdosed on Propranolol. The Emergency Services were notified and Lily was taken back to the hospital via ambulance, however resuscitation attempts were unsuccessful.

Key Lines of Enquiry

Transition from Children's to Adult's Services

1. Explore the transition process between children's to adult's services.
2. Identify any gaps in policy, procedure and practice when supporting care leavers who are not placed in their placing authority area.
3. Explore the shared understanding of legislation/statutory duties in relation to Lily.

Partnership Working Across Borders

1. Consider the effectiveness of multi-agency working across borders, with a particular focus on responsibility for accommodation.
2. Was there effective challenge and escalation to resolve critical issues, such as onward accommodation?

Lily's Voice and Making Safeguarding Personal

1. To establish whether Lily's voice was represented – was she involved in decisions relating to her care?
2. If Lily was involved, and there were concerns for her safety and wellbeing, were the principles of the MCA applied?
3. To what extent was the voice of the foster carer considered in planning for Lily?

The Review

The Case Review Group (CRG) recommended that this case met the criteria for a Statutory Safeguarding Adult Review. This was confirmed by the Southampton Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB) and a Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) was commissioned. The methodology focused on a practitioner event and a case review panel to work with the reviewer to clarify information specific to Lily, consider learning from other Southampton reviews and develop recommendations for changes to practice.

Findings

Lily's Transition from Services for Children to Services for Adults

- When interventions are provided for young people prior to their 18th birthday, this indicates they have a need for services. Following her 18th birthday, Lily was advised she did not have care and support needs – if she needed mental health support, she would have to contact her GP and was signposted to Steps2Wellbeing.
- There was minimal use of transition planning meetings involving key professionals.
- Agencies should reflect upon the impact of this transition and to consider how multi-agency planning could prevent an escalation as they enter young adulthood.
- Reflection - It is essential that agencies consider a trauma informed approach when planning around transitions for care experienced young people to ensure that their needs are prioritised.

Partnership Working Across Borders

- Lily became a Care Leaver to Hampshire County Council when she turned 18. Whilst in hospital, Ordinary Residence became a point of dispute regarding who was responsible for housing Lily.
- Lily remained in hospital despite being medically fit for discharge, which impacted on her mental health, and she tragically took her own life before the dispute was resolved.
- Reflection - Agencies should consider the impact on the individuals when there are corporate disputes over responsibility for future planning.

Lily's Voice and Making Safeguarding Personal

- There is evidence of Lily's opinions being sought around her future plans for accommodation. However, once she turned 18, she made contact requesting support for her mental health and was advised to contact her GP and Steps2Wellbeing. This was a significant change from the provision of services prior to her 18th birthday.
- The uncertainty around where she would live and how she would be supported was known to be very difficult for Lily, and the decision not to refer to CMHT appears to have been made without Lily or her foster carer knowing. Indeed, they had previously been of the understanding that there would be service provision in place following her 18th birthday.
- Reflection - Agencies to consider how it feels for young people to understand that they would be receiving support services when they turn 18, to then be told that this would not be the case and they would need to access supports themselves.

Useful links for Best Practice

- [Multi-Agency Framework for Managing Risk and Safeguarding People Moving Into Adulthood](#)
- [Professional Curiosity](#)
- [Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults Escalation Protocol June 2023](#)
- [Suicide Awareness](#)