

Bolton Safeguarding Adults Board publishes Safeguarding Adults Review following the death of 'David'

Bolton Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB) has today published the findings of a Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) into the circumstances surrounding the death of "David" (a pseudonym), a 37-year-old Bolton man who experienced significant physical health difficulties, mental health challenges, substance misuse and criminal exploitation prior to his death in 2024.

The review was commissioned under Section 44 of the Care Act 2014 to examine whether partner agencies could learn from David's case.

The review found that David was subjected to exploitation and "cuckooing", where vulnerable people are manipulated or coerced and their homes are used by others for criminal or exploitative purposes. It also highlighted the challenges faced by agencies in responding to individuals with multiple and complex needs who may not meet statutory thresholds for ongoing support, but still remain highly vulnerable to harm.

Review identified examples of committed practice and timely support from professionals across a range of organisations.

However, the review has concluded that some opportunities were missed to bring agencies together in a coordinated, multi-agency response to manage escalating risks and develop longer-term safeguarding plans.

The review makes a number of recommendations focused on strengthening partnership working, improving local responses to cuckooing and exploitation, enhancing multi-agency risk management arrangements, and ensuring professionals are better supported to respond to adults with complex vulnerabilities.

Neil Smith, Independent Chair of BSAB, said:

"David's death was a tragic event, and our thoughts remain with his family and those who knew him.

"This review highlights the challenges agencies face when supporting adults who are living with multiple disadvantages and who are vulnerable to exploitation and harm.

"It also reinforces the importance of agencies working together, sharing information effectively and maintaining a coordinated response when risks are complex and ongoing.

"The Board and its partners are committed to learning from David's experiences and implementing the recommendations from this review to strengthen safeguarding arrangements and improve outcomes for adults at risk across Bolton."

BSAB and its partner agencies have accepted the findings of the review and will oversee the implementation of an action plan to ensure the lessons identified lead to meaningful improvements in practice.

The full review is available on the Bolton Safeguarding Adults Board website.

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Notes to editors:

Safeguarding Adults Boards are a statutory requirement under The Care Act 2014.

The board reviews local safeguarding arrangements to ensure measures are effective, person-centred, and outcome focused.

Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) were established on a statutory basis under Section 44 of the Care Act 2014.

The purpose of a SAR is to review multi-agency practice and promote effective learning and improvements to prevent future deaths or serious harm occurring again.

A SAR is not an inquiry into how an adult at risk has died or was seriously harmed. These are matters for coroners and criminal courts, respectively, to determine as appropriate. It is not to apportion blame to any individual or organisation.