

Statement of the Independent Chair of Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Adults Board on the publication of a Safeguarding Adults Review into the case of JA

1. Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Adults Board is today publishing a report into the care and safeguarding interventions provided to an adult person who died in her own home sometime after the last visit to her home from a health, social care or other professional person, or from any other care or public protection service.
2. JA was found deceased in her property after police gained entry following concerns that JA had not been seen for several weeks. Adult JA was living with her son who was still living at the property, but had not reported her deceased. Adult JA and her son were living in conditions of significant hoarding, self-neglect and had not engaged with services that were trying to offer care and support.
3. This case has highlighted the challenges of engaging with a person who might have care and support needs within the terms of the Care Act 2014, but one where considerable efforts had been made to engage with JA and her son, but where these were resisted.
4. Publication of this report follows a decision by Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Adult Board on 14th July 2021. Delay in publication since that date has been due to assurance being received that the son had had an opportunity to consider the report and make any request about it directly to the qualified and experienced social worker who was eventually able to make contact with him about the review report.
5. The Overview Report of a Safeguarding Adults Review within the terms of the Care Act 2014, Section 44 is being published in full here. The report was compiled independently by a highly experienced Safeguarding Adults Review author, Karen Rees.
6. Karen Rees sought understanding of the case and pursued her review in a participative and engaging way with the many professionals who had been involved with JA and her son in recent times. The review process was overseen by the Safeguarding Adults Board's Safeguarding Adults Review Committee and its Chair, the Deputy Nurse Director in Barking, Havering and Redbridge NHS CCG.
7. The report author concludes that there was no doubt that this case was frustrating for the professionals but also for JA and her son. Many professionals tried very hard to offer support and treatment for JA, and support for JA's son as her carer. Nothing that was tried resulted in a mutually respectful or collaboratively negotiated care plan with JA's wishes and feelings at the centre. It was very clear to the author that the relationship between adult social care and the family broke down many years previously and was unlikely to be repaired.

8. When considering the case review report the Safeguarding Adults Board dwelt on the challenges of this case, and more widely, for professionals and organisations when a person is reluctant to engage and there may be (or may not be) issues of neglect, self-neglect, dangerous hoarding, questions about mental health or mental capacity and about safeguarding risk. These can be complex moral, legal, policy and practice matters for professionals and their managers.
9. The report author made a number of recommendations for consideration across organisations – about self-neglect and hoarding, ‘complex cases’ and general learning. An example requiring further work by organisations is how to ‘step back’ in such a case in caring, appropriate, lawful and recorded way. To these ends the Safeguarding Adults Board will be undertaking some multi-agency face-to face workshops with front line professionals to develop practice thinking and skills.
10. The Safeguarding Adults Board also considered that there were matters in this case and the review report that would be of value to learning not just in Barking and Dagenham and North East London, but more widely. As a result the report will be submitted to the National SAR Library at the same time as it is being published on the Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Adults Board area of the Council’s website.

Brian Parrott
Independent Chair, Safeguarding Adults Board
Barking and Dagenham
January 2022

Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Adults Board members:

London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Council
North East London Clinical Commissioning Group (NEL CCG)
Metropolitan Police Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge
North East London NHS Foundation Trust
Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospital NHS
London Fire Brigade - Barking and Dagenham
National Probation Service - Barking and Dagenham