

Leicester Safeguarding Children Board Multi agency Learning and Improvement Review

Brandon

The Leicester Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is today publishing [the summary](#) of a multi-agency learning and improvement review into the death of 15 year-old Brandon, who sadly took his own life in August 2016.

Reviews of this kind are carried out when a young person dies, to look at how the agencies involved worked with the young person to safeguard their welfare.

Unlike serious case reviews, there is no legal requirement to publish this kind of review. However, members of the LSCB felt the learning around care provided to children and young people experiencing mental health problems should be shared locally and nationally, and all agencies agreed to publication.

Jenny Myers, Chair of the LSCB said: "I was deeply saddened to learn about Brandon's death. He was a much-loved son, brother and friend and our sympathies go out to all of those affected by his loss.

"I commissioned an independent author to carry out this review to ensure that all agencies could benefit from any learning about the quality of services provided to Brandon and his family, and therefore affect future support for families in similar circumstances.

"The review makes some significant observations about how, despite a range of different professionals' involvement, this young person and his family were still not adequately supported.

"It demonstrates how complex and difficult it is to work with a young person with severe mental health issues who actively refuses to engage with services, and the immense pressure that puts on the family trying to support their child and get help.

"For me the pertinent issue that was missed was that the responsibility for engagement should have laid with the professionals and not with the young person. He was clearly increasingly unwell and therefore his capacity to make informed choices and ability to make meaningful relationships with professionals was limited.

“Much has been said about whether any bullying took place that may have triggered Brandon’s illness. What is important is that as far as Brandon was concerned that’s how it felt to him, and it was Brandon’s voice that should have been listened to.

“The review makes a number of recommendations and agencies have already implemented some real changes that will help to improve local services. However, it must be recognised that nationally the number of children with mental health problems is rising, and we know that local child and adolescent mental health services are currently facing an increase in demand.

“Around half of all mental health problems start before the age of 14, so early help and prevention is the key.

“In Leicester every school is being provided with additional support to build children and young people’s resilience & mental well-being, and to make it easier for them to access mental health support through the national NHS Future in Mind programme.

“All of the agencies involved have given their commitment to improving the services available, and the LSCB will play its role in making sure this happens”.

The key recommendations to come out of the review are that:

- the LSCB should be assured that the Leicestershire Partnership Trust’s Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) is addressing the key learning points in regard to the practice and engagement of young people.
- the local authority should review the provision of alternative education for children who, through ill health, aren’t able to be educated in school.
- there should be greater awareness-raising for professionals around working with adolescent mental health and emotional wellbeing issues, and the services open to them.
- the local authority should ensure schools review their response to perceived bullying issues and that where children appear to be undergoing emotional mental health issues, they are adequately supported by the school.

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