

## Learning Briefing 2

### **Case Summary:**

Jake was aged just over 20 at the time of his death in the autumn of 2014. He was a care leaver and considered to be a vulnerable adult. He had been in and out of prison and had been recalled to prison during the month before his death due to a breach of his licence conditions. He was released around 3 weeks after his recall to prison and for a variety of reasons was classed as being intentionally homeless. He was found deceased around a week after he was released on a railway line near where he lived as a child. He had a 2 year old daughter at the time of his death. The review was undertaken for the period when Jake was recalled to prison until the time of his death.

### **Key Messages – areas for improvement:**

Jake's history, as a young person, despite being a care leaver was not known/clear. This meant risks he posed to himself or others could not be thoroughly assessed.

Accommodation was a key issue, Jake's non-engagement, past behaviours, high rent arrears and abandonment of accommodation, his believed threat to his partner and child, were all complicating factors in finding suitable accommodation and were acts which led to the decision that Jake was intentionally homeless; this meant that there was no clear accommodation option upon his release from prison just prior to his death.

When people are on a short recall (28 days), they do not get a support worker in prison, which meant that as this was the case with Jake, his vulnerability may not have been known and therefore any risks would not have been conveyed to the Social Work team responsible for him as a Care Leaver.

Prison systems, regarding movements of Jake within them, were not always up to date and so it was difficult to know where he always was.

Not all agencies were aware of his imprisonment, or where he had been living prior to imprisonment; this meant there was poor communication between agencies.

Had this been in place, meetings to discuss his vulnerability, risks, and concerns would have been useful prior to his release from prison.

### **Key Messages – good practice:**

Jake had a good relationship with social care prior to his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, which is deemed to be a reflection of the effort and time given to him by professionals.

There was a long term plan for Jake's accommodation, which Jake was happy with.

Jake was given time on the Monday, following his release from prison, money, food, and a phone were provided for him.

Another area of Children's Social Care were involved with Jake; specifically in relation to concerns about his daughter. Efforts were made while Jake was in prison to engage him in this process which he expressed appreciation for. There was a distinction made between Jake as a care leaver and Jake as a father. The Social Work Team responsible for Jake were involved in the Child Protection processes regarding his daughter.

There was good evidence of communication between agencies and time and effort was spent on his case. This was key in relation to the accommodation issues. A meeting would have assisted this further.



**Recommendations for practice:**

Case files for all young people should have a full chronology. This should be accessible and updated throughout the young person's life. This will enable ongoing vulnerability to be assessed.

Plan 'B' should be in place for care leavers regarding accommodation, which needs to be clear in the Pathway Plan.

Consideration to be given to engaging more housing providers for vacant rooms for emergency accommodation.

All care leavers who are imprisoned, should have a pre-planning discharge meeting with every professional service, including the prison. This should form part of the Pathway Plan review. Consideration should be given to practical and emotional issues facing the care leaver. This should be done regardless of the prison term.

Communication and collaborative working to be given further effort and consideration regarding the vulnerability of care leavers and decisions around intentionality of homelessness. This to hopefully lead to housing departments being in a position to offer former relevant care leavers accommodation on their release from prison regardless of their housing history.

**This review was commissioned by the South Gloucestershire Serious Case Review Sub Group and was undertaken on June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2015.**

**The process of this review highlighted the need for families to be involved in the process of these case reviews. The decision was taken at this meeting, that this would be embedded in practice for all future reviews.**