



Response to Martyn Safeguarding Adult Review by Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership

In October 2018, a 25 year old man called Martyn tragically died at the home of a friend. Martyn had multiple care and support needs including mild learning difficulties and foetal alcohol spectrum disorder. A number of organisations had contact with him or were involved in his support plan. He was described by his mother as kind and thoughtful. Video evidence from the hours prior to his death showed that he had been the subject of abuse from his 'friends' whilst the group was intoxicated. Some of the 'friends' involved in the incident were also eligible for care and support services. Martyn's death could not be definitively linked to the abuse, therefore his cause of death was recorded as 'unascertained'.

As Independent Chair of the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership (KBSP), I am responding on behalf of the Partnership to the findings from this review. I would like to start by expressing my condolences to Martyn's family, as well as thanking Martyn's mother whose engagement has provided the independent author and review panel with an important perspective on Martyn's life and experiences. Martyn's mother has written her own public statement, which is available to read on our [website](#) alongside this Partnership response.

The purpose of a Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) is to use learnings from the case under review to promote and reinforce effective practice, and identify where improvements or adjustments to the system needs to be made. SARs should be open and transparent and present the learning identified in an effective and accessible way. On this occasion, the Partnership has decided not to publish the report in full. This is because the circumstances of this case means that those involved would be readily identifiable, and in particular we wish to protect the privacy and dignity of Martyn. However, the Partnership have published a [Learning Briefing](#) for professionals from this SAR. This briefing can be used for individual learning, team meeting briefings or individual supervision to ensure that the findings are disseminated widely.

After receiving a referral for a SAR in late 2018, the Bristol Safeguarding Adults Board (now incorporated into the KBSP) agreed to commission a SAR. The Partnership commissioned Julie Foster, an experienced Local Safeguarding Adult Board (LSAB) chair and SAR author who is independent from the services involved with Martyn to lead on this review.

The start of this SAR was delayed to allow for the completion of the criminal trial and the review process begun at the beginning of 2020. Representatives from the agencies involved with Martyn provided written reports and attended a series of review team meetings. The independent author



analysed this information and produced the final report, including recommendations for improvement to practice in Bristol. The review has identified a number of themes of learning, but also the following areas of good practice:

- Professionals ability to identify vulnerability when dealing with Martyn
- The consistency of staff working with him
- Communication between agencies
- Implementation of safeguarding adults protocol and processes.

The following learning themes have been recommended for consideration by the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership:

- Mental capacity
- Social isolation and meaningful activity
- Mate/hate crime
- Substance misuse.

Whilst there were no areas of practice identified which required immediate change to protect adults with care and support needs in Bristol, the independent author has made six thematic recommendations to the KBSP. The Partnership have accepted these recommendations and are committed to delivering changes as a result of these findings. These recommendations as well as our plan for addressing the recommendations can be seen below.

In addition to the review recommendations, a number of further improvements have been implemented within organisations in the two years since Martyn's death. Second Step, the voluntary service provider, has gone through a restructure and have made improvements to their support service including streamlining the process of reviewing clients changing support needs and introducing a 28 day 'cooling off' period after a service user cancels a service. The volunteer service has also made changes to how it supports volunteers with lived experience. Avon and Somerset Police have introduced the BRAG (Blue, Red, Amber, Green) vulnerability tool and rating system to help staff identify and risk assess all forms of vulnerability and safeguarding. Bristol City Council's Preparing for Adulthood Team has improved its risk assessment for service users in transition when case closure is under consideration. It is also establishing a new 'Transitions to Adulthood Team' to promote greater independence from age 14. At a strategic level, the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership held a workshop on 'Transitional Safeguarding: adolescence to adulthood' and is progressing work on system change and barriers to effective safeguarding for 16-25 year olds. It has also included 'ensuring people don't fall through the gaps' as a priority in the Partnership strategic plan.

It is my intention that this SAR will result in professionals reflecting on their practice and deliver improvements where necessary and appropriate in accordance with the SAR recommendations. The resulting changes in practice will be the lasting legacy of Martyn who died tragically in Bristol.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Ivan Powell', is positioned above the printed name.

Ivan Powell

Independent Chair

Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership

Recommendations and Partnership response

- 1. Mental capacity.** It is recommended that the Partnership has reassurance that multi-agency training is available on the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and future changes to the law, and that 'executive capacity' is explored.

The KBSP business unit will disseminate a survey to review the multi-agency Mental Capacity Act training available within the partnership. The survey will review how the training is accessed, by how many practitioners, how often it is updated and if 'executive capacity' explored within the training. Results will be brought to the SAR/Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) sub-group meeting in April 2021 for consideration.
- 2. Social isolation and support.** It is recommended that the Partnership review the opportunities available to facilitate meaningful activities and engagement for people living in the community with a learning disability.

The KBSP business unit will undertake a consultation with people living in the community with a learning disability to understand the opportunities and barriers to partaking in meaningful activities. The findings of this consultation will be brought to the SAR/DHR sub-group for consideration.
- 3. Transition to adulthood.** It is recommended that the Partnership considers transition from living in more restrictive settings to the greater freedom of choice available in independent living.

Research will be undertaken into this review and other Bristol SARs (Christopher and the Mate Crime Thematic Review) to determine how the Partnership understand transitions and changes to independent living. This research will be led by colleagues in Adult Social Care and Health, and findings will be brought to the SAR/DHR sub-group in February 2021.
- 4. Hate/mate crime.** It is recommended that the Partnership review and refresh the actions resulting from the [Mate Crime Thematic Review \(2018\)](#) to ensure that practitioners are aware of Mate Crime and the support available to people at risk.

KBSP have reviewed the action plan from the 2018 Mate Crime Thematic Review and have agreed to refresh the actions that will help the partnership to respond to mate/hate crime appropriately. KBSP have ensured that the latest version of the Regional Joint Safeguarding



Adults Policy (2019) makes a reference to mate/hate crime within the types of abuse and indicators section. KBSP have re-promoted mate crime resources alongside the publication of this SAR and plan to offer training that includes the subject of mate/hate crime in their 2021 webinar series.

5. **Alcohol and substance misuse.** It is recommended that the Partnership review the services available to provide support to people with a learning disability. KBSP will scope the expertise on the subject of learning disability and alcohol/substance misuse within Bristol. This information will be sent alongside a letter to Bristol City Council Public Health to request that people with a learning disability are considered within the recommissioning of alcohol and substance misuse services, which forms part of the Bristol's Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2020-24.