

SAFEGUARDING ADULT REVIEW (SAR)

LEARNING BRIEF - NATALIE

Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR)

The purpose of a Safeguarding Adult Review is to use learning from the case under review to promote and reinforce effective practice and identify where improvements or adjustments to the system need to be made.

The Care Act 2014 states that a Safeguarding Adult Board must commission a SAR when:

- (1) an adult in its area dies as a result of abuse or neglect, whether known or suspected, and there is a concern that partner agencies could have worked more or effectively to protect the adult,
- (2) an adult in its area has not died, but the adult has experienced significant abuse or neglect, whether known or suspected.

Background information

Natalie, a white British woman, died in her 20s in May 2023. The cause of death was concluded as suicide.

Natalie had been placed in the local authority's care as a young person. Natalie had experienced repeated, complex, and ongoing trauma during her life, and had been known to several agencies.

Natalie was a loving mother to Casey who lived with foster carers under an interim care order at the time of Natalie's death.

Themes

Trauma, care experience, domestic abuse and sexual violence, mental health, the heightened risk of suicide following child removal and drug/alcohol use.

Key findings

Understanding of, and responses to Natalie's story

The SAR recognised that Natalie often signalled a willingness to work with services and responded best to face-to-face and home-based contact. However, at times, even preferred channels didn't lead to sustained connection, pointing to a need to understand what helped engagement feel safe and possible for her. The SAR notes that strong practitioner relationships help prevent people 'bouncing' between services and keep the focus on the person rather than the system.

It also highlights the importance of recognising how care experience and the trauma of child removal intersect to shape mental health and engagement. In the period before her death, Natalie faced further traumatic experiences. The interim care arrangements for Casey were recognised as deeply distressing for Natalie and a time when suicide risk was likely heightened. The SAR reflected that earlier access to specialist, trauma-informed support may have benefitted her.

Information sharing and multi-agency working

Agencies shared information well and Natalie engaged positively. Learning points highlighted that multiple assessments sometimes fragmented support. Since 2023, whole-system coordination has strengthened: [Changing Futures](#) intervention named [My Team Around Me \(MTAM\)](#) now wraps services around the person with a single coordinated plan, reducing repeated storytelling; and [Bristol's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub for adults \(MASH\)](#) enables timely, holistic information-sharing and risk decisions that consider care and support needs, indicators of abuse/neglect, and the person's ability to stay safe.

Multi-agency management of risk

The SAR found that practitioners recognised Natalie's rapid disengagement as a clear escalation in suicide risk, but a proportionate multi-agency response did not follow. The review recommended that partners ensure timely, proportionate, multi-agency safety planning grounded in relational, therapeutic practice, aligned with NHS [Staying Safe from Suicide](#) best-practice guidance (April 2025). Learning from the review also highlighted that escalation routes were too dependent on informal relationships and indicated that managers need to actively support practitioners to escalate concerns via the KBSP [Escalation Protocol](#) where there are competing concerns.

Good Practice

- Avon & Somerset Police and Bristol City Council (BCC) Housing & Landlord Services worked together to identify alternative accommodation; Housing responded swiftly to the 2023 emergency request and prioritised a move due to Natalie's vulnerability.
- In May 2023, Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership (AWP) shared risk information and discharge plans with Changing Futures and BCC Adult Social Care, setting out closure and a clear re-referral route to the Triage Service.
- BCC Children & Families Through Care Personal Advisor and the Changing Futures worker provided consistent, trauma-informed support.
- In January 2025, BCC councillors unanimously recognised care experience as a protected characteristic.

A total of **13 recommendations were made in relation to this SAR**, all of which are outlined in the Executive Summary.

Support

Birth Links

[Birth Links](#) is an independent service offering advice, guidance, and short-term emotional support for adopted adults and birth relatives before, during, and after adoption across the Adoption West region. Call 07394 569544 (Mon–Wed) or email birthlinks@adoptionwest.co.uk.

Suicide

To speak with the [National Suicide Prevention Helpline](#), call [0800 587 0800](tel:08005870800), alternatively phone [0800 689 0880](tel:08006890880). If you or someone you care about is experiencing an emotional or mental health crisis needing immediate attention, reach out to the person's GP, the GP out-of-hours service, or call NHS on 111. If you fear for someone's immediate safety, guide them to Accident and Emergency or dial 999 for immediate assistance.

Bristol Horizons

[Bristol Horizons](#) is a collaboration of community organisations, offering inclusive and accessible drugs and alcohol support to help anyone in Bristol make informed choices about their wellbeing. Email BristolInfo@horizonsbristol.co.uk or call [0300 555 1469](tel:03005551469).

Mental Health

[Bristol Mind](#) offers services that are accessible, relevant and empowering to people using them. Call 0117 980 0370 to speak to [Mind Information Service](#) about the support on offer or email info@bristolmind.org.uk.

You can also call Bristol MindLine, an out of hours confidential listening service on 0808 808 0330, open 7 nights a week 7-11pm.

Changing Futures

[Changing Futures Bristol](#) are a government funded programme, dedicated to improving local services for [adults and young people who experience multiple disadvantage](#). Changing Futures are working with organisations to help them understand where they are on their [My Team Around Me](#) journey both at practice and strategic levels. Email them at info@changingfuturesbristol.co.uk for more information.

Contact Us



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