



Keeping Adults Safe – Case Study

Background

Young man (Liam) with Learning Disability & Dyspraxia living independently in Housing Association flat with floating support from an agency. Liam attended groups at a youth club, as a young person and as a volunteer for a disability forum group.

Incident(s) – leading to referral

Liam turned up for his volunteer work looking dishevelled & disorientated. Upon questioning, Liam revealed that he'd spent the night in a prison cell, having been accused by a male, who was staying at his flat, of stabbing him in the foot. Liam vehemently denied this.

Youth worker referred case to Bristol Hate Crime Service which was allocated to disability caseworker. Caseworker took report from Liam with his Support Worker, who had logged a timeline of events as Liam began to dis-engage from his support. Support Worker had also witnessed other changes and drug paraphernalia at the flat. The man had waited for Liam outside his work place in a nightclub & walked home with Liam, he claimed to know Liam from school (a school for challenging young people and disabled yp). Incidents included Liam's hair being set alight, a new coat being damaged & malicious gossip spreading that Liam was a paedophile. Suspected other bullying that Liam was unable to relay as he indicated that he was 'to tell no one'. Neighbours had made complaints to the Housing Association of noise and anti-social behaviour and Liam had been issued with a warning.

The perpetrator and girlfriend were staying at his flat (& using this flat to take drugs).

Action Taken

Safeguarded the case, liaised with Adult Care.

Liam was terrified of repercussions but BHCS caseworker and Support Worker supported Liam to make an Intelligence Report to the police. We were also able to inform the police that, as Liam had dyspraxia, he would not be able to accurately aim a knife.

Informed the youth centre staff, tried to inform a voluntary sector support service - they were working with the perpetrator with offices adjacent to the youth centre but despite many calls they didn't reply. Liaised with youth centre who took actions to safeguard Liam, alerted staff & banned perp from anywhere near the building.

Multi-agency approach taken – weekly safeguarding meetings with Adult Care,

BHCS, youth centre, the police, the support agency, the Housing Association, Liam and a friend (not the same one he was staying with). Liam did not feel safe to stay at his flat. Actions were taken to safeguard Liam. A Social Worker was appointed who worked with Liam to find alternative housing. Liam desperately wanted to maintain his independence but after many discussions, decided that housing where support was readily available could be beneficial. BHCS caseworker informed the Housing Association that Liam was a victim of 'mate crime' and offered training, (this wasn't taken up).

There were further incidents when Liam was physically attacked by friends of the perpetrator, called paedophile and approached by perp. The police spoke to the perp and asked him to keep his distance from Liam. A referral was made to safeguarding with Liam's consent.

Several complexities to the case as Liam was a victim and under investigation himself, (the case against him was later dropped). Other challenges were Liam being able to recall/remember information and maintaining engagement, partly due to distress/anxiety and partly impairment related. However, the BHCS case worker and support agency worked very hard in supporting Liam, had a very good relationship with him and so worked through these challenges.

A professional from Bristol Hate Crime Services also offered training on disability hate and mate crime to the housing association but they didn't take up the offer.

Outcome

Liam rehoused in supported housing – in his own flat but with support within the complex. Liam was encouraged to find activities in the community, he became involved with many activities, he was busy and happy the last time I spoke with him and spending less time at the youth centre.

The case against Liam was dropped due to insufficient evidence.

Insufficient evidence against perp to prosecute but he was spoken to by the police with no further incidents.

Learning Points

Awareness raising – the disability forum worker was aware of disability hate crime and how to report otherwise this case may not have been identified.

Social Housing Landlords need more awareness of disability hate and mate crime cases as the victim could have been penalised when he wasn't creating the ASB.

Good multi-agency approach, worked well to protect and safeguard the victim. Important to encourage/engage victim of mate crime cases towards healthy activities

& meet new peers.

Flags put onto police systems in order to understand that Liam's new address was supported living, and therefore susceptible to mate crime type issues – Neighbourhood Beat Manager to ensure they were aware of the address.

RJ approach could have worked with perpetrator.

Liam was a mild-mannered person who wanted to be liked, wanted to be recognised as a young man in his own right, preferred to mix with non-disabled people, he therefore mixed with people who did not always accept him, were not kind to him and left him open to bullying. He did not always recognise the bullying, it was important that the youth centre staff were aware of this and put plans in place to support him with this.

Some staff at the youth centre may have benefited from disability equality and disability hate crime training.