

BB SAR 7 MINUTE BRIEFING

1. Safeguarding Adults Reviews

The John review was commissioned by the City and Hackney Safeguarding Adults Board (the Board) as a statutory review. John was a white British man who was 42 years old when he died unexpectedly at home. John had physical and mental health needs and his educational and behavioural support needs had been recognised whilst he was at nursery school. John lived with, and was supported and cared for by, his parents. John used alcohol and drugs and was in contact with a range of services. The aim of the review was to identify how support for people like John and their families could be improved.

2. Background

John liked music and history. He had wanted to work in the theatre and had briefly studied photography. John was dependent financially and emotionally on his parents, with whom he lived, and had been described as self-neglecting. In addition to physical, mental health and substance use needs, John was suspected to have an undiagnosed autism spectrum condition. John's mother said that when John had made up his mind, he would not change it. John's father was seriously ill and John's mother was caring both for him and for John. There were incidents of domestic abuse in the relationships between John and his parents and between his parents and there were contacts with the police in addition to contacts with mental and physical health, substance use, housing, domestic abuse and housing services.

3. Intergenerational Domestic Abuse

It is important to consider and respond to domestic abuse within a family context. There is a need to explore how domestic abuse impacts on each family member and to recognise the role of, for example, mental and physical health needs, drugs and alcohol and of caring and dependency in abusive relationships. The London Borough of Hackney has created an Intergenerational Domestic Abuse Protocol, which provides guidance on this.

4. Think Family

Do not just focus on your client and their needs, but consider how they relate to other members of their household and their family. Find out about their relationships and gather background information and history. Consider how you can support a family as a whole unit and how you can work with family members and friends to support your client. Find out if they have care and support needs too and keep offering Carers Assessments, even if these have been declined in the past.

5. Care needs and substance use

Do not focus all your attention on substance use. There are likely to be underlying care and support needs too so offer, or refer for, a care and support needs assessment. If you are intervening in substance use, for example, with detoxification programme, make sure that this is coordinated with other agencies so that support can be provided to sustain abstinence.

6. Late or undiagnosed autism

Due to changes in criteria and increased awareness, there are likely to be people who have an undiagnosed autism spectrum condition. Consider if there are signs of this and how it might impact on a person's understanding of service options and on their decision making. You do not need a formal diagnosis in order to make adaptations to your approach.

7. Summary of recommendations

Explore and respond to the impact of domestic abuse in family situations.

"Think Family" and consider the needs of clients and of their household and family. Identify how you can work with family and friends to meet your client's needs.

Do not rely on substance use as the explanation for a person's presentation, consider and respond to care and support needs and mental and physical health needs too.

Assess mental capacity to understand and engage in interventions. If clients or their families refuse to engage, use different approaches and consider what might influence their decisions. These might include an undiagnosed autism spectrum condition or substance use related brain changes.